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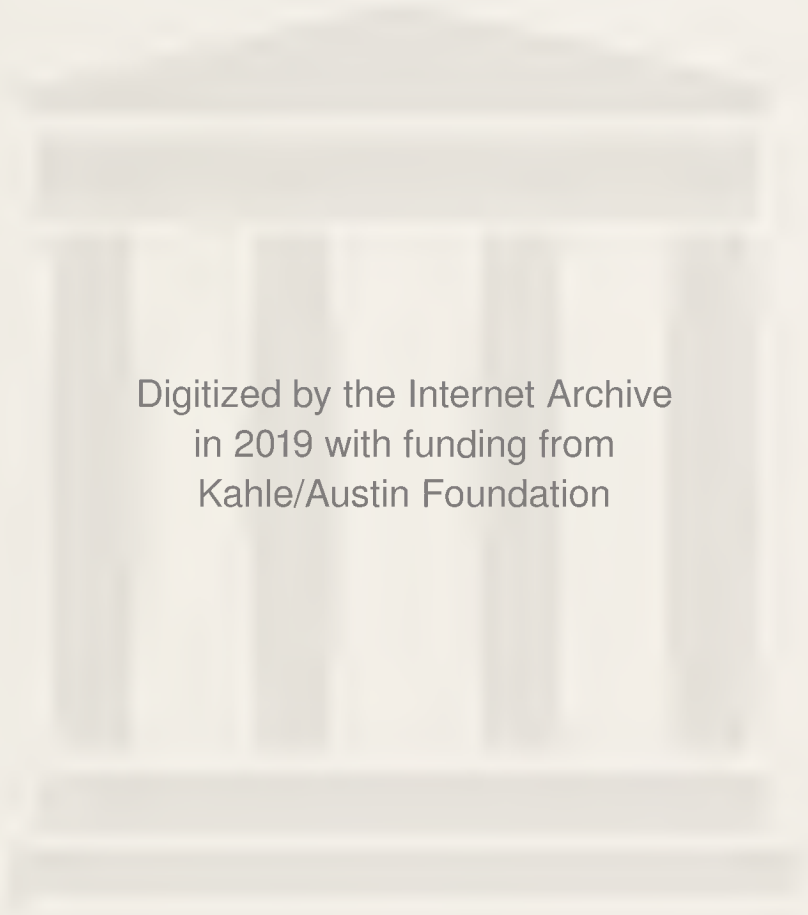
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Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self

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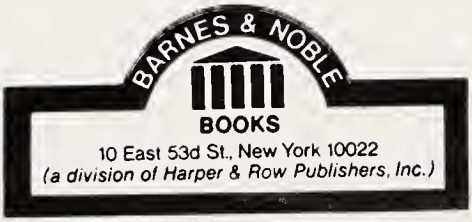
Gerard J.P. O'Daly



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to

Willy Theiler

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PREFACE

This book was submitted in November 1968 to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Berne as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is now published without any substantial changes being made in the original manuscript.

I am indebted to the Senate of the National University of Ireland, whose award of a Travelling Studentship enabled me to engage in research work on Plotinus at Berne, and whose generous financial help made possible the book's publication.

I owe an especial gratitude to Professor John J. O'Meara, who first stimulated my interest in Neoplatonism during undergraduate days in Dublin, and who has been unfailing in his advice and encouragement at every stage of my work.

Professors A.H. Armstrong and G.L. Huxley read the book in typescript, and greatly encouraged its publication. Professor Huxley suggested many improvements of style and expression.

What I have learnt about Plotinus and Neoplatonism from Professor Willy Theiler is more than I can easily reckon: there is no page of this book which does not bear in some way, however imperfectly, the stamp of his influence. I have been privileged to enjoy his penetrating criticism, the exciting range of his learning and his great personal kindness during my years at Berne and since. This book is dedicated to him, in recognition of an incalculable debt.

Finally, my thanks are due to the editors and printers of Irish University Press for the care and attention which they have given to the production of this book.

Lancaster, May 1972 G.J.P. O'D.

ABBREVIATIONS, REFERENCES AND SYMBOLS

The only abbreviations which need explanation are:

DK	*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 7th edition, by H. Diels, edited with additions by W. Kranz, Berlin, 1954.
MacKenna	*Plotinus: The Enneads*, translated by S. MacKenna. 3rd edition, revised by B.S. Page, London, 1962.
Plotins Schriften	*Plotins Schriften,* übersetzt von R. Harder. Neubearbeitung mit griechischem Lesetext und Anmerkungen, 6 vols. in 12, Hamburg, 1956-1971. (After Harder's death, this edition was continued by R. Beutler and W. Theiler)
RE	Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart, 1894-.
Sources	*Les Sources de Plotin*, Entretiens tome v, Fondation Hardt, Geneva, 1960.
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, edited by H. von Arnim, Leipzig, 1903-1924.
Theiler, *Vorbereitung*	W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus*[2], Berlin, 1964.

This book follows the now generally accepted convention of indicating, in references to the *Enneads*, the chronological position of a particular treatise by means of a number

between square brackets. Thus, for example, I 1 [53] refers to the first treatise of the first *Ennead*, the fifty-third treatise Plotinus wrote.

Translations are generally cited in the MacKenna translation, sometimes with modifications.

For typographical convenience, Greek terms and phrases are frequently transliterated, e.g. *nous, logos, hemêis.*

Spiritus asper is indicated by the prefix *h- ; for the Greek letters* η *and* ω *the symbols ê and ô are used.*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this work is to investigate the concept of "self" in the philosophy of Plotinus. That this concept plays an original and important part in Plotinus' thought has long been observed by commentators.[1] Emile Bréhier, in his book *La Philosophie de Plotin*, the first edition of which appeared in 1928, clearly isolated the phenomenon of self:". . . cette hypostase qui constitue notre âme . . . ce n'est pas tout à fait nous-mêmes; à cette réalité existant en soi qui constitue notre âme s'ajoute notre propre attitude à son égard; nous pouvons être en elle à des niveaux différents; nous pouvons nous séparer de sa partie supérieure . . . Il semble parfois que Plotin ait l'intuition d'une activité proprement subjective qui, elle, ne peut se transformer en chose et s'hypostasier . . . notre moi, ce que nous sommes pour nous n'est pas adéquat à notre âme."[2] Another French scholar, Jean Trouillard, takes up these themes in his book *La Purification Plotinienne*, published in 1955, and gives some striking formulations of the notion of self in Plotinus: "Le moi est partout, mais il est surtout ce qu'il veut être effectivement . . . le moi est curseur . . . il est *polyvalence* et *oscillation perpétuelle*."[3] In his excellent introduction to a selection of texts from Plotinus, written in 1956, Richard Harder observes the importance of the notion: ". . . die klare Gegenständlichkeit der klassischen Philosophie wird blasser, 'das Ich' (dieser Begriff taucht bei Plotin zuerst auf) wird zum Hauptträger der Wirklichkeit."[4] At the *Entreteins* on the *Sources de Plotin*, held at Fondation Hardt in 1957, E.R. Dodds comments: ". . . is not Plotinus the first to have clearly distinguished the concepts of soul . . . and ego . . .? For him the two terms are not coextensive. Soul is a continuum extending from the summit of the individual *psychê*, whose activity is perpetual intellection, through the normal

empirical self right down to the *eidôlon*, the faint psychic trace in the organism; but the ego is a fluctuating spotlight of consciousness."[5] Finally, W. Himmerich, in his book *Eudaimonia: die Lehre des Plotins von der Selbstverwirklichung des Menschen*, published in 1959, devotes a chapter[6] to the self in Plotinus, in what is the most comprehensive survey of the notion so far. The essential results of his research have elsewhere[7] been formulated by him: "hier [i.e. in Plotinus] ist der philosophische Ursprung des Ich- und damit des Personbegriffes . . . das Ich ist für Plotin . . . Entscheidungsinstanz . . . Mittel- und Mittlerinstanz zwischen Sinnlichkeit und Geist . . . Spontaneität . . . Es ist . . . das Vermögen der Ortung seelischen Seins, welches die Entscheidung trifft, auf welchem Niveau des Seins der Mensch lebt. Er kann auf animalischem, auf geistigem, und auf transzendentalem Niveau leben."

Such a central concept[8] in Plotinus' thought is deserving of fuller investigation. The present work started as an attempt to verify the above assertions; made primarily about the self of the historical process (chapter 2). It soon became clear that the concept was not only apparent throughout the course of Plotinus' writings, but that it developed in richness and importance for him over the years. Furthermore, the relation of this self of historical process to the original, intelligible self of which Plotinus often speaks, and the problem of the latter's individual existence in the totality of Being, called for study (chapter 3). So did the notion of self-knowledge, with its Delphic undertones (chapters 1 and 3). And, since it was found that the reality of the self at intelligible level remains unimpaired, it seemed essential to venture to the limits of Plotinus' thought, and ask—what of the self in *unio mystica*? Is it annihilated, or can we say of Plotinus that, here too, he stressed the reality of the ego (chapter 4)?

The investigation, thus carried to its logical extreme, underlined the variety and subtlety of the flexible notion of self in Plotinus: a notion at once novel in ancient thought and distinct from modern, idealistic versions (such as Fichte's

Ich). At a time when much energy has been expended to relate Plotinus to a philosophical tradition, and to limit his originality, it seemed valuable to stress this unique aspect of his thought.

1. The Delphic Commandment as Philosophical Propaedeutic

Speaking of the Delphic commandment "Know Thyself", Plotinus says that it applies to those beings who, because of their multiplicity, have the task of learning the number and nature of their parts. They are ignorant of some or all of these, just as they do not know their very principle, and what constitutes their real selves, VI 7, 41,22. Plotinus wishes to stress the contrast between these beings and the One, which has no self-awareness, no intellection, because its pure unity has no need of the self-consciousness which guarantees the identity of, for example, the twofold Intellect with itself, *ibid.*, 19ff. Transcending Being, the One can have no intellection, for "the first and true Intellection is identical with Being," 36. The One suffices for itself: another passage in another treatise explains that this is the primary, essential self-sufficiency of the wholly simple nature, without lack or need of any kind; and to be distinguished from the secondary level of self-sufficiency, which needs itself, and needs to know itself, V 3, 13,17. The latter is the level of Being, not yet alienated from itself, properly speaking, but maintaining its identity in the activity (*energeia*) of its intellection[1] – for it is itself the object of its own intellection, and this activity is necessary to its existence.

Such a necessity can be imputed to pure Being by means of the analysis of its structure in which Plotinus here engages: but it is not self-evident. On the level of human existence, however, it is clear that souls are in a state of alienation from themselves and from their source, V 1, 1,1ff. Yet this state comes from the will to self-possession. Is this a contradiction? No: and precisely because this will to freedom is mistakenly selfish, and means that souls become ignorant of their origin in the Transcendental. If Plotinus had coupled ignorance of one's ruling principle with that of one's real self

in our opening passage, it was because, for him, true self-possession and self-knowledge necessarily involve awareness of one's source.[2] Further, one can say that, for Plotinus, the act of introversion is a conversion towards the source.[3]

Thus the Delphic utterance would apply in a particular way to the human subject in disintegration: its salvation will begin with its "knowing itself", with its regaining of self-possession, in the proper sense. This, in turn, will imply not merely an awareness of one's constituents, but also an openness towards one's source in the hierarchy of which one is a member. Thus Plotinus urges an investigation of the nature of the soul, because it leads to two types of knowledge, of what sphere soul itself is the principle, and what its principles are; and he associates this with "the ordinance of the God who bade us know ourselves", IV 3, 1,1ff. Any investigation of Plotinus' teaching on the self-knowledge of the human self must therefore take account of the relations of the self to its principles, and not confine itself to defining its more immediately apparent characteristics. That this is inherent in Plotinus' own method will become clear when his concern to establish the nature of the "Thyself" of the Delphic formula is delineated.

Porphyry tells us that when he faced the task of editing Plotinus' writings, which "had been issued without consideration of logical sequence", it seemed best to disregard their chronology, and to arrange them systematically in groups of related topics.[4] Of these groups of nine treatises the first, he says, deals with topics of a predominantly ethical tendency, and the opening treatise of the group is called "What is the Animate? What is Man? " Plotinus begins his inquiry by saying that we must find where the emotions like pleasure, fear and desire have their seat, and where the mental and physical acts deriving from these are located: furthermore, reason and opinion, and our acts of intellection, are to be examined, and the examining principle itself should be investigated. What Plotinus is proposing here is none other than an elaborate programme of self-analysis, an enumeration

of one's constituents, which we have seen to be a part of the recovery of self-identity, that task imposed upon all that is multiple and conscious.

Now it was Porphyry's aim as editor to facilitate the reader's introduction to Plotinus by "leading off with the themes presenting the least difficulty".[5] I 1 is, however, one of the more notoriously difficult of any of the treatises, and Richard Harder has convincingly argued that Porphyry's comment applies to the order of the *Enneads* themselves, and not to that of the individual treatises.[6] In general, the ethical topics of the First *Ennead* – the virtues, happiness, evil, beauty – are the most immediately available to the beginner, especially the beginner of antiquity, for whom, as it has been said, philosophy is "an all-embracing activity concerned with everything relevant to the realization of the ultimate purpose of human life"[7] and motivated by a eudaimonistic ethic. Now I 1, insofar as it tries to establish the faculties by which man, constituted as he is, may attain happiness, and, in turn, qualifies the latter in that it is relative to human nature, can undoubtedly be considered as a systematic introduction to ethical questions: but in its complexity, in the variety of themes it touches upon – and which, as will be shown, recur frequently throughout the *Enneads* – it is more. Can we go so far as to call it a preface to the Plotinian *corpus*, even, in Porphyry's eyes (and here he might merely be bringing explicitly to the fore what Plotinus, in scattered treatises and discussions, had suggested), a *philosophical propaedeutic?* Is there an historical tradition of such a propaedeutic? And, if the answers to these questions be in the positive, how does Plotinus introduce and develop such a theme, and integrate it into the fabric of his thought?

An important step towards answering the first question can be made if we take it in conjunction with the second, historical query. Let us look more closely at the text of I 1, 1. Where, asks Plotinus, do the emotions have their seat? He lists three possibilities: in the "soul", in the "soul using a body", or in a "third principle distinct from these". This latter can be either a "mixture" or some new form due to the

"mixture". These alternatives resemble those given on another occasion by Plotinus, when, speaking of man on the level of sense, he says that he is either a *logos*, different from the life-producing soul, or that very soul, or "the soul using the particular body", VI 7, 4,7ff. Now the source of the two possibilities common to both these lists – "soul" and "soul using a body" – is well-known: it is the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades*. There, having said that man is "the principle using the body" (129e), that is, soul in its ruling capacity, the author mentions three possibilities: man is "soul or body or the composite [of both]" (130a); then, systematically disposing of the latter two on the basis of their not being ruling principles, the author is left with the conclusion that confirms his hypothesis – "the soul is man". Basing oneself on arguments developed previously (129b ff.) in the dialogue, one can add "the soul which is man is a soul using the body as an instrument (*organon*)." Plotinus is familiar with the notion,[8] which, following ancient tradition,[9] he attributes to Plato, VI 7, 5,23. The other possibility mentioned by the pseudo-Platonic author, the "composite", will also be important for Plotinus: in I 1, 5,8 it is the name given to the "couplement (*koinon*)",[10] one of the subdivisions of the "third principle" of chapter 1,3 of the same treatise.[11] Interestingly, the term "composite" will be that ultimately accepted in the investigation of VI 7, 4-5, as characterizing man *qua* "soul in a particular *logos*", 5,2ff., although it has already been criticized as an inadequate definition (*logos*) of man.[12] Even the third possibility of the *Alcibiades*, the "body", is not neglected by Plotinus, but he will consider only the "body of a particular kind" (I 1, 4,24), a living, or potentially living body, with the trace (*ichnos*) of soul.[13]

That Plotinus is influenced by the *Alcibiades* is clear. Now in that dialogue Socrates, discussing the prime ethical question, what "art" (*technê*) makes men better, and so happier, suggests that we can never know this so long as we are ignorant of what we ourselves are (128e). And he equates this with the temple inscription of Delphi, "Know Thyself",

a command which has to be fulfilled if we are to know what we should pursue (129a). In other words, self-knowledge, understood in terms of defining the nature of the self of man, is a necessary prelude to any ethical discussion. What we have already seen to be the Plotinian starting-point in philosophy is here anticipated by a writer who may have been active in the Academy in the generation after Plato's death. Furthermore, the characteristic noted in Plotinus, that self-knowledge necessarily involves knowledge of one's principle, is also foreshadowed in the *Alcibiades*. The soul, says Socrates, will know itself, and know that part in which its *aretê*, which is wisdom, resides. This latter is the faculty of *phronêsis*, the most divine aspect of the soul, which is thus godlike, "and whoever contemplates this, and has knowledge of all that is divine – God and *phronêsis* – in this way he will really *know himself*."[14]

In answer to the first question asked above,[15] we can, therefore, at this point of our investigation say that I 1, asking as it does what man is, may be the essential preface not only to what Porphyry calls the "ethical" writings, but also to the *Enneads* as a whole. This has been clarified for us in part by the parallel of the *Alcibiades*, where the definition of man is a prelude to ethics and philosophy in general. And the second question has been partially answered thereby. But there is a tradition of the philosophical interpretation of the Delphic inscription and of the definition of the self, as old as Socrates. This is deserving of some attention in an historical excursus, which will in turn establish the context in which our third, and main question can be dealt with at length.

That the Delphic commandment "Know Thyself" was adopted by philosophers and interpreted by them in primarily ethical fashion, has been pointed out by W. Theiler,[16] who adduces a list of texts from Socrates' day onwards. The passages mentioned by him will be surveyed in the following account, which will extend Theiler's list – on the one hand, by mentioning others, on the other hand, by including those texts dealing with the problem of man's true self. This

problem, insofar as the self investigated is the real self of self-knowledge, is immediately related to the sense of the Delphic maxim in Plotinus (and, indeed, by some of the authors whom we here quote).

Several passages are quoted in an ancient anthology, that compiled by Stobaeus in the twenty-first chapter of his *Florilegium*.[17] Stobaeus includes not merely philosophers like Xenophon, Plato or Porphyry, but also quotes from literary texts, especially of the comic writers Antiphanes (Middle Comedy), Menander, Philemon and Diphilos (New Comedy), whose fondness for ethical maxims is well known, to illustrate the ever-prevalent use of the commandment. The earliest philosopher referred to by Stobaeus is Heraclitus, in a testimony of the gnomologue Aristonymus: "When Heraclitus was a young man, he was wiser than any, because he knew that he knew nothing."[18] The assertion, made also of Chilon, Bias, Demonax and – significantly – Socrates, is clearly a cliché of the ancient tradition: its source is almost certainly Socrates' account in Plato's *Apology*[19] of the Delphic oracle's reply to the query about his wisdom. It was clearly applied to Heraclitus on the basis of the fragment "I investigated myself."[20] Plutarch, indeed, relates it directly to Delphi, quoting the fragment as a paraphrase of "Know Thyself". The relation may have existed between Heraclitus' assertion and the Delphic command[21] – G.S. Kirk speaks of his "ethical advice . . . with which one may compare the Delphic maxims 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing too much'."[22] But it is worthwhile drawing attention to another ancient interpretation of the fragment, which would serve to discount a conscious connection. Diogenes Laertius says of Heraclitus that "he had no teacher, but said that he had searched out himself, and learnt everything by himself,"[23] an account which would underline the extreme independence of mind, and healthy contempt for other men's ideas, so characteristic of the philosopher. The words "I investigated myself" may mean no more than what Diogenes sees in them.

More clearly based upon the Delphic command is the passage in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (IV,ii, 24ff.) where the

notion of self-knowledge is – typically for Xenophon – exclusively ethical and practical in sense. Self-knowledge (25) consists in knowing one's worth in respect of one's usefulness, and of the capability one has in affairs. Ignorance of oneself means not knowing one's capabilities, and (26) brings as many misfortunes upon man as self-knowledge brings him advantages. Among such advantages are success and prestige (28),[24] and the same applies to cities as to individuals (29). Self-knowledge is essential to wisdom (33); nobody can achieve happiness without it (35).

H. Maier[25] believed that this Xenophon passage was influenced by a passage in Plato's *Phaedrus*.[26] Be that as it may, the tenor of the *Phaedrus* passage, and of those other texts in which the Platonic Socrates refers to Delphi and its command, are far removed from the shrewd self-assessment that Xenophon advocates. We have already referred above to Socrates' relation to Delphi as described in the *Apology*, to his "service"[27] of the god Apollo.[28] Aristotle says that the inscription "Know thyself" was the "most divine" of the Delphic inscriptions, and that it became the starting-point of Socrates' philosophical probings.[29] In the early Aristotle, Socrates became, as Jaeger has pointed out, "the restorer of the ethical principle of Apolline religion";[30] for him "Apollinism and Socraticism are the two foci in the development of Greek ethics."[31] But his Apolline mission is already stressed in Plato, and may well have been a feature of the historical Socrates.

Thus, for example, the Socrates of the early *Charmides* identifies the self-knowledge recommended by the Delphic inscription with *sôphrosynê*, the subject studied in that dialogue.[32] In the *Philebus*,[33] on the other hand, the inscription is invoked only to lead to an interesting distinction of the three types of *self-ignorance*, that is of (a) those who consider material things more valuable than their own "essence (*ousia*)"; (b) those who consider bodily goods more valuable than their "truth (*alêtheia*)", and (c) those who *believe* that they are virtuous rather than really *being* so. Essential here is the distinction between "opinion (*doxa*)"

and "truth" or "essence": it is implied that true self-knowledge is knowledge of one's *ontic* or *real* self. Plato was not unaware of this concept of the real self: the term "inner man", in the *Republic*,[34] points to it as well. Thus Socrates in the *Phaedo*[35] distinguishes his concrete, historical self from the self, now embodied, but which will depart after death. In the context of that dialogue, this real self is the immortal soul. This would have been Plato's definition of the self – and thus the author of the early Academy who composed the *First Alcibiades*, discussed in detail above,[36] was faithful to Plato in defining the self – or "man" – as soul.

Reference has already been made to Aristotle's description of the Delphic maxim as "most divine", and his sense of its importance for Socrates' philosophical activity. In the same dialogue (*On Philosophy*), he concerns himself with the source of the command.[37] As Jaeger points out,[38] he goes about this in thoroughly scientific fashion: by trying to settle the history of the building on which the inscription was written. His deductions about the latter's age lead him to conclude that it was a maxim older than Chilon, or any of the seven sages mentioned, or the historical Pythian priestesses he names – in fact, it must emanate from the Pythia herself.[39] No doubt, as Jaeger says, this conclusion served Aristotle's theory that the same truths reoccur in human history several times, that philosophy, particularly in ethical proverbs and maxims,[40] has pre-literary origins.

Of more significance is the study of our real self in another early Aristotelian dialogue, the *Protrepticus*. There,[41] Aristotle, speaking of the soul as a ruling principle, mentions its *logos* as that which, in turn, rules it, and concludes that this is the real self: ψυχὴ μὲν σώματος βέλτιον (ἀρχικώτερον γάρ), ψυχῆς δὲ τὸ λόγον ἔχον καὶ διάνοιαν ... ἤτοι μόνον ἢ μάλιστα ἡμεῖς τὸ μόριον τοῦτο. This formula appears to have been Aristotle's definitive conclusion on the matter, for it occurs at least three times in his mature work, the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Thus[42] ἑαυτοῦ ἕνεκα (τοῦ γὰρ διανοητικοῦ χάριν, ὅπερ ἕκαστος εἶναι δοκεῖ) and τὸν νοῦν ... ὡς τούτου

ἑκάστου ὄντος. F. Dirlmeier[43] remarks that Burnet[44] took such a notion to be Platonic – an opinion with which Dirlmeier concurs.[45] He criticizes, however, Burnet's assertion that such notions – about man's true self as the *dianoêtikon* – are simply received opinion, and not Aristotle's true belief. Now Burnet, writing in 1900, was unaware that the *Protrepticus* passage, quoted above, was Aristotelian: for, despite Bywater's pioneering article of 1869,[46] the examination of the *Protrepticus* of Iamblichus as evidence for Aristotle was not thoroughly carried out until Jaeger wrote his book on Aristotle.[47] Dirlmeier, on the other hand, is in a position to assert that the *Protrepticus* passage is evidence that the notion, although Platonic in origin, was held with conviction by Aristotle.[48]

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle, discussing the definition of man from a formal view-point,[49] says that man can be defined either as the soul, or as the living being, or conjoint of body and soul. These are logically derived possibilities, closely related to Aristotle's notion of the various types of definition.[50] For our purpose, it is interesting to observe that the definition of man as a "conjoint" is a forerunner of what we have called the man of historical process in Plotinus – the other definition is, of course, the Platonic one.[51]

For the Stoa, with its rejection of the immaterial soul in favour of the life-giving *pneuma*, whose highest aspect, the intellectual *hêgemonikon*, is apparent in man, it is clear that the real man consists in this *pneuma*. This must be the sense of the Cleanthes fragment identifying "soul alone" with man.[52] Here the soul is bodily, but in the special sense in which, as O. Gigon[53] reminds us, the latter term has for the Stoa. More nuanced are the statements of the eclectic Cicero. Thus he can on one occasion define the self as *mens*: "mens cuiusque is est quisque,"[54] a formula which seems identical with the passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. On another occasion, he refers explicitly to the Delphic command, and brings this into relation with the question of what faculty can know itself:

> est illud quidem vel maximum animo ipso animum

> videre, et nimirum hanc habet vim praeceptum Apollinis, quo monet, ut se quisque noscat . . . cum igitur "nosce te" dicit, hoc dicit, "nosce animum tuum" . . . ab animo tuo quidquid agitur, id agitur a te.[55]

Now self as *animus* would appear to be different from self as *mens*, just as *psychê* differs from *nous*. But it would be rash to over-differentiate in Cicero's case. For in the first passage, in which he speaks of self as *mens*, he substitutes self = *mens* for *animus* ("sic fragile corpus animus sempiternus movet"), and both passages here quoted are followed by the same translation from the *Phaedrus*,[56] so that Cicero is clearly thinking of *soul* as self here, perhaps of the Stoic soul, that unity of reason and life-giving force. On the other hand, if Theiler's suggestion[57] is correct, it is possible that Cicero, in speaking of *animus* and then of *mens* in the same context, was under the influence of a late Stoic tendency, which Theiler ascribes to Poseidonius, of distinguishing more sharply between the *hêgemonikon* and the vital soul, or *pneuma*. This distinction is clear in Marcus Aurelius, 2,2: ὁ τί ποτε τοῦτο, ὅ εἰμι, σαρκία ἐστὶ καὶ πνευμάτιον καὶ τὸ ἡγεμονικόν. 12,3: τρία ἐστίν, ἐξ ὧν συνέστηκας· σωμάτιον, πνευμάτιον, νοῦς. τούτων τἆλλα μέχρι τοῦ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δεῖν σά ἐστι· τὸ δὲ τρίτον μόνον κυρίως σόν. In the latter passage[58] there can be no doubt: self is *nous*. Now Cicero may, in speaking of *mens*, have had this new interpretation in mind: the survival of *animus*, however, would indicate the novelty of distinguishing *mens* (or *nous*) from the rest of the soul in Stoic circles.

The importance of obeying the Delphic command as a prelude to philosophy is first stressed explicitly by Alexander of Aphrodisias, in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*,[59] δεῖ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων απάντων πείθεσθαι τοῖς προσταττομένοις ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν ... ὡς διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ γνώσεως ἑκάστῳ περιεσομένου τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν βίου, ἡ δ' ἑαυτοῦ γνῶσις ἐν τῇ γνῶσει τῇ καθ' ὅ ἐστιν αὐτός, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπος. The possible influence of not only the notion of a prelude to philosophy, but also of a

definition of the self, as here given, on Plotinus, must be reckoned with.[60] We know that Alexander was read in Plotinus' circle,[61] and in recent years a number of interesting and convincing studies has been made, showing his influence on Plotinus to have been of significance.[62] As for Alexander's definition here, it is, of course, conditioned by the commentary he is writing. "Knowledge of the soul is necessary, as it is the real man: hence the value of Aristotle's *De Anima*, on which I am about to write" – such is his implied argument. Nor should we forget that Aristotle, as in the passages from the *Metaphysics* mentioned above, can call the real self "soul".

Porphyry, whose concern with the importance, for Plotinus, of the problem of the real self led him, as we have seen, to place the treatise which asks "What is the Animate? What is Man?" at the beginning of his master's works, was himself aware of the philosophical richness of the Delphic maxim. He was the author of a work in at least four books entitled Περὶ τοῦ γνῶθι σεαυτόν.[63] Three extracts from this work are preserved for us by Stobaeus.[64] In the first of these, which probably derives very largely from Aristotle, is contained that question on the human or divine origin of the maxim: from it the passage from Aristotle's *On Philosophy*, discussed above,[65] has been reconstructed. In the second extract Porphyry identifies the knowledge referred to in the maxim with knowledge of *nous*, of man's real self or essence, δεῖ πάλιν γνῶναι τὴν οὐσίαν ἡμῶν ἥ τις ἐστίν. Such knowledge is the beginning of true philosophy, which proceeds from knowledge of self to that of the "all" or "whole", but which is ultimately subordinate to its end, *eudaimonia,* ἡ γὰρ τεῦξις τῆς ὄντως οὔσης οὐσίας ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ταύτης ἀληθὴς γνῶσις σοφίας ἦν τεῦξις, εἴ γε σοφίας ἴδιον ἡ τῆς ὄντως οὐσίας τῶν πραγμάτων ἀληθὴς ἐπιστήμη, διὰ σοφίας δὲ ἡ τῆς τελείας εὐδαιμονίας γίγνεται κτῆσις.

In the third extract Porphyry stresses that "we" are also this visible phenomenon, the "external" or descended man, and that to this man the command to self-knowledge also applies. He distinguishes between τὸ γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτόν (of

soul and *nous* — our essence) and τὸ πάντῃ γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτόν (including not merely ourselves but also what is ours):[66] τὸ μὲν οὖν γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἀναφορὰν ἔοικεν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τὸ γιγνώσκειν δεῖν τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸν νοῦν, ὡς ἐν τούτῳ ἡμῶν οὐσιωμένων· τὸ δὲ πάντῃ γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτὸν συμπεριλαμβάνειν ἔοικεν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα καὶ τὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων. What this latter type of "complete" self-knowledge consists in is suggested: καὶ πάλιν πάντῃ γνῶναι ἑαυτόν, ἵνα καὶ ὁ ἐντὸς ἀθάνατος γνωσθῇ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ ἐκτὸς εἰκονικὸς μὴ ἀγνοηθῇ καὶ τὰ τούτοις διαφέροντα γνώριμα γένηται. διαφέρει μὲν γὰρ τῷ ἐντὸς παντέλειος νοῦς, ἐν ᾧ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος, οὗ εἰκὼν ἕκαστος ἡμῶν· διαφέρει δὲ τῷ ἐκτὸς εἰδώλῳ τὰ περὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὰς κτήσεις. Ultimately, Porphyry concludes, it is only through possession of knowledge of both types that a truly balanced and appropriate vision of man's condition is possible.

The following chapters will show that several of these themes occur in Plotinus. Of particular importance is the notion that self-knowledge, though primarily of the noetic self, is not confined to it, but includes the *eikonikos*, the individual, or self of historical process. Chapter 2 seeks to demonstrate that this is a Plotinian notion. The view of Porphyry's that self-knowledge is the starting-point of philosophy, substantiated in the extracts quoted above, is reinforced by his choice of the late Plotinian treatise on the Animate and Man as the systematic introduction to the *Enneads*.[67]

We possess late Neoplatonic commentaries by Proclus and Olympiodorus on the *Alcibiades*. We also possess evidence that in the fifth and sixth centuries the programme of Platonic studies at Athens and Alexandria included the *Alcibiades* as an introduction to philosophy.[68] At the beginning of Proclus' commentary[69] we find the now familiar themes of the philosophical propaedeutic, of self-knowledge as knowledge of one's essence (*ousia*), of such knowledge as the *sine qua non* of human perfection – themes which by Proclus' time were clearly an accepted part of the Platonic school-tradition. Thus 1,3: τῶν Πλατωνικῶν

διαλόγων καὶ πάσης, ὡς εἰπεῖν, τῆς φιλοσόφου θεωρίας ἀρχὴν κυριωτάτην καὶ βεβαιοτάτην εἶναι νομίζομεν τὴν τῆς ἑαυτῶν οὐσίας διάγνωσιν ... 7: πέφυκε γὰρ ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων, ὥσπερ τὸ εἶναι διάφορον, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡ τελείοτης τοῖς μὲν ἄλλη, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλη, κατὰ τὴν τῆς οὐσίας ὕφεσιν. The theme of the different "goods" attributable to the different classes of being is then developed. The Delphic inscription at the *entrance* to the shrine signifies that self-knowledge is the necessary prelude to philosophy: 5,9, ὁ μὲν γνοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀφ' ἑστίας ἀρξάμενος συνάπτεσθαι δύναται θεῷ τῷ τῆς ὅλης ἀληθείας ἐκφαντικῷ καὶ ἡγεμόνι τῆς καθαρτικῆς ζωῆς. Turning to the Platonic writings (5,13), and remarking that Socrates described himself as Apollo's "priestly servitor", Proclus says that the *Alcibiades* fulfils most perfectly the Apolline command to self-knowledge. The *Phaedrus* is also quoted:[70] the whole is a rich survey of the "Delphic motif" in the Platonic Socrates.

There is, therefore, a philosophical tradition of interpreting the Delphic command "Know Thyself" and relating it to the problem of man's true self. What we have isolated as a philosophical propaedeutic in Plotinus is present, in varying degrees, in Greek thought from Socrates to Proclus. In the latter's day, it has become formalized by the use of the *Alcibiades* as a philosophical primer. We can now turn to examine in detail the final questions asked above:[71] how does Plotinus develop the themes of *self* and *self-knowledge*, and what is their place in his thought?

2. The Self and the Soul

This chapter will investigate Plotinus' statements on the constitution of the historical self. In the following pages, and throughout the rest of this work, these statements will be considered in their chronological order. We believe that it is thereby possible to gain some interesting insights into the unfolding of Plotinus' thought: if we speak of "development" in his thought, it is in the sense which P. P. Matter intends, when he speaks of an "innere Entfaltung"of Plotinus' philosophy, "das immer wieder in der auf frühere Einsichten *zurückgreifenden Weiterführung* bestimmter Gedanken besonders deutlich in seiner Eigenart heraustritt."[1] Matter stresses that Plotinus' thought does not develop in the sense that he radically recasts or rejects formerly held views:[2] it is not a development of revolutionary nature, as, for example, Plato's in his theory of Ideas. Matter himself has shown that the system of the hypostases is not entirely unfolded at the beginning, but is gradually constructed in the first eleven treatises.[3] If, with him, we believe in a "development" in Plotinus—against the general opinion of scholars[4] – it is in this qualified sense.

It is assumed in Plotinus that the individual self exists: the process of individualization, of the outgoing of individual souls from the All-Soul, guarantees this. Such an assumption can be observed in an early treatise, III 1[3]. There, in chapter 4,21 ff., Plotinus, speaking against the Stoa-inspired notion of a world-unity, says that if it were as the Stoics maintain, then "we are no 'We'", using the term for "self" – *hêmeis* – which he himself has coined. Nothing would be ours, he continues, nor would we reason "as ourselves"[5] in such a situation. Similarly, in chapter 5,20 ff., polemizing against undue astrological influences, he says that "we must be allowed our own," and that a distinction must be made

between "what we do ourselves, and we undergo of necessity".[6] These passages attest to the reality of the self which is there in Plotinus' thought from the start: "we" are separate entities, who think and act "for ourselves".

In an early passage, Plotinus discusses what "we" may be. It is a question of whether everyone of us is mortal or immortal, IV 7[2], 1,1 ff. Of the "us" Harder comments[7] that it is "terminologisch 'der Mensch'". Subsequently it is replaced by the term "man": Harder notes that *hêmeis* is "Offenbar Schulsprache: bei Plotin stehender, reich differenzierter Sprachgebrauch." There can be no doubt that Plotinus consciously uses the term right from the beginning of his literary activity. In the following sentences of the passage, it is said that "man is not a thing of one element only", but has soul and body, the latter either as an "instrument (*organon*)"[8] or attached in some other way. The divisible, decomposing body is then shown to be clearly mortal: if it is a part of us, then we are not wholly immortal. But it is just as likely to be merely our tool, then as matter to the form of the real, authentic man, and so not as essential "part", even though we describe it as "part of us". In either case, asserts Plotinus, in conclusion, the soul is the real self.[9]

In this early passage, Plotinus accepts, in substance, the traditional Platonic definition of the self. The definition of the *Alcibiades* is maintained, with confidence. There is no attempt to include the notion of the embodied self (what will subsequently be called "the composite") in the definition. Yet the passage is curiously relevant to the later beliefs of Plotinus: several of the key terms, which, in themselves, are to facilitate the transformation of his thought, occur here – *hêmeis, anthrôpos, autos*. Nor is the phrase "part of us" to be unimportant: it will be a major problem of the later treatises to decide to what extent things "of ours" can be said to be inherent in the identity of the self.[10]

The treatises following upon IV 7 do not deal directly with the notion of "self". True, IV 8[6] speaks of individual souls, especially in chapters 4 ff., where their *apostasis* from the intelligible whole in the realm of partial existents (4,19

ff.) is dealt with, and where it is said that we are "amphibious", living in both the transcendent and the incarnate spheres (4,32). But the implications of this "double life" are to be discussed in a later context: closer to our purpose are certain remarks in the treatise on "Our Tutelary Spirit", III 4, [15]. Having said (1,1 ff.) that Soul, in contradistinction to the other hypostases, which remain at rest while their products come into being, creates *by its motion*, and, echoing the *Phaedrus* (2,2 ff.), creates in various forms – the sensitive (*aisthêtikon*), the reasoning (*logikon*) and vegetative (*phytikon*) – Plotinus asserts that the phase of soul dominant in each form carries out its characteristic end: the others remain idle, "being external". This principle is now applied to the soul of man. In man, says Plotinus, the lower – and by this he means the *phytikon* – is not supreme: but it is nonetheless an accompaniment. Nor is the higher – here the *logikon* – alone supreme, for man lives in part by sensation, and, insofar as his body grows and propagates, by his vegetative principle, too. All phases collaborate, but *the entire being, man, takes rank according to that which dominates in him*, κατὰ δὲ τὸ κρεῖττον τὸ ὅλον εἶδος ἄνθρωπος. We are here confronted with a notion of the self in which ethical and ontological elements interact. What Plotinus is, in fact, saying is that we are what we have made ourselves to be, by our dominant pursuits, by the type of life – determined in turn by the phase of soul – according to which we have chosen to live. This ethical moment assumes, in the following, an objective form: for Plotinus relates it to the fate of the soul after death. In a subsequent existence, the soul – or self – assumes the identity appropriate to the rank attained to in this life. Those who have kept to the human level are men once more – the "human level" being, presumably, the *logikon*, "according to which" the being is "man" (this version of line 10 need not contradict that given above: the phrase is ambiguous, in a positive sense, for, on the one hand, "that which dominates" determines the type of man, and on the other, it is the reasoning phase that first brings the essentially human to light). Those who live wholly

sensually become animals: one might say that they "are" animals already in this life, never realizing their rational potential. And according to their characters, animals of different types. There are even those whose active principle was primarily vegetative, and these become plants.

But these details of transmigration of souls interest us only insofar as the determination of one's self – to remain as man, or either to transcend one's "humanity" or sink below it – is clearly shown to be a choice devolving upon man himself. The soul's power of choice is stressed in chapter 5 of the treatise, where the Platonic allegory[11] of the soul's choice of life in the higher world, previous to existence here, is said to be an expression of the soul's inherent tendency and disposition. Plotinus is, however, faced with the difficulty that embodiment seems to have a detrimental effect on soul, or that, conversely, a vicious soul can corrupt a good body. He insists, however, on the efficacy of the soul's activity when its decision is made with its entirety (line 14). Similarly, the "guiding spirit" or *daimôn* which each of us possesses by his own choice (chapter 3,8) – for it is the Prior which stands above the individual spirit, the next stage in the hierarchy, to which one aspires: in modern terms, one's "ideal" – this spirit is neither entirely outside of us, nor bound up with us: it is "ours", as belonging to the soul, but "not insofar as we are particular human beings living a life to which it is superior" (5,20 ff.). Finally, the essential individuality, and freedom of man as individual, is appealed to in the impressive allegory of chapter 6,46 ff. The soul returning to this sphere embarks on the "ship of the universe"[12] in "the seat of the lot of life", to partake in the voyage of the "Universal Circuit", an Odyssey of varied sights, experiences and adventures to which it is exposed on the sea-tossed vessel. Yet it acts of itself, too, through its "particular impulse",[13] because it is a passenger in its own individual way.

In this context, then, we find evidence for a notion of the self as that which determines man's existence. This aspect of Plotinus' notion of self has been characterized by W.

Himmerich as "das Vermögen der Ortung seelischen Seins, welches die Entscheidung trifft, auf welchem Niveau des Seins der Mensch lebt. Er kann auf animalischem, auf geistigem und auf transzendentalem Niveau leben."[14] The accuracy of the last phrase, or rather its *comprehensive* nature, will be subsequently questioned, but there can be no doubt that it illustrates another quality of the self aptly instanced by Himmerich, its "Spontaneität, in der die Notwendigkeit von Entscheidung mit einem Spielraum von Freiheit der Entscheidung koinzidiert."[15] The philosophical reader will, however, ask himself: what is the basis of this spontaneity, this freely choosing faculty which determines the level of man's existence?

We must recall that it was from an investigation of the forms which the soul's activity may take that Plotinus started to develop his notion of the levels of self (chapters 2 and 5). It is precisely in the nature of the soul that the answer to the above question lies: "for the soul's nature includes many things, indeed everything, the higher and the lower, insofar as life in any form exists," 3,21 ff. Each of us is an "intelligible universe" linked both to this world and to its intelligible prototype – a dimension, this latter, to be explored later – what is important is that our souls, containing as they do the possibility of every manifestation of life, are not only an intelligible universe, but "a subordination of various forms like that of the Cosmic Soul", 6,23. This could be concluded from a thesis of Plotinus', already established by him when he was writing III 4, namely, that of the unicity of the soul.[16] If all souls are one, then each individual soul may be expected to reproduce the characteristics common to all and to the Cosmic Soul, with which they are one. Their differentiation, which makes them many, will not consist in their having different faculties, to the exclusion of others, or in their being separate in any way from the totality of psychic activity. All souls being all things, each will be differentiated "according to its operative phase", which, in turn, is determined by the object of each soul's vision.[17] Plotinus here says of the soul what is said above of the self or

man. There is, however, no indication that he has, as yet, specified in III 4 the equation of self with soul made already as early as in IV 7, 1. The rational nature of man is, however, stressed, and his relationship with *nous*, as well as the One – for the "good man" has either *nous* or *theos* (the One) as his presiding spirit – is mentioned in the context of self-identity. But above all, the treatise introduces us to the fundamental notion of a responsible, fluctuating faculty in man, as yet identified with soul, yet ranging the intelligible and psychic universes, and capable even of debasing itself – or being debased – below the properly human level.

It is again the thesis of the unicity of soul which is Plotinus' next starting-point for an investigation of the nature of the self. In VI 4[22], 14,1 ff., he asks how can there be a particular soul of the individual if there is one soul at every point. The answer is prepared in the concept of an "intelligible whole" at once "one and unlimited ... with everything – all life and all soul – as one together". It is a primal unity, nor does individuality occur there, the individual souls being eternally what they are. Things of process approach and merge with this primal unit, 15. What then are "we", asks Plotinus, using the term which appeared in IV 7, but which will from now on dominate his thinking on the self. Are we the higher primal, or that which approaches and begins in time? Before we existed here, he answers, we had existence in the transcendent; upon that primal Man, a member of the intelligible, has intruded "another man", who seeks to come into being. He has wound himself around us, adjoining himself to the man that each of us was at first.

Thus our "real self" is located in a transcendent phase, prior to "our" existence here on earth, and this because we are soul, one of the *theia* (V 1, 7,49). Yet the self of the realm of process is also "man", aspiring to that state, and transforming our nature here: for "we" have become the combination of both, neither simply the Higher, nor simply the Lower.[18] Here is clearly stressed the effect of the human condition upon the self – a notion already implicit in the statement, quoted above, that we are "amphibious"[19] and

suggested also at I 2[19], 6,3 ff., where it is said that the man who strives "to be god" has a twofold nature: he is "god and *daimôn*" – or rather a god with another, conjoined lower power – if there is any involuntary influence, coming from outside the real self, on his actions. What is there a moment in the life of man, that wrongdoing which, in Socratic terms, is ignorance, and so unwilled, becomes in our text an existential determinant of man. And this determinant, more fully precise than hitherto, is clearly distinguished from the "higher", unchanging self. From now on, Plotinus will devote a not inconsiderable part of his attention to examining, ever more exactly, and with greater nuances of complexity, the empirical self of the human condition.

The first fruits of that examination may be seen in the section of that long treatise entitled *Problems of the Soul* (IV 3 and 4 [27 and 28], which is devoted to the problem of memory. Plotinus establishes, in chapters 25 and 26, that it is, properly speaking, a "fact of the soul", but the problem remains, of what soul, the more divine, that constitutive of ourselves, or "that other which springs from the All", by which is meant what Theiler has called "die den Menschen in den Zwang des Alls verstrickende Seele".[20] Plotinus answers tentatively that both have memories, personal and shared, which are one when the two souls are together; when they separate, and still continue to exist and endure, each retains for a longer period its own memories, for a shorter time that of the other. Thus the *eidôlon* of Hercules in Hades[21] remembers the activities of his life, "since that life was mainly of the hero's personal shaping", 9; and this *eidôlon*, in Plotinus' opinion, is also to be considered as "we", as "the characteristically human part". The other souls in Hades,[22] themselves "the composite" – here most likely in the sense of a combination of the two soul-phases, divine and *eidôlon* – speak merely of the events of their lives here. But Homer does not tell us what Hercules' *real self*, freed of this *eidôlon*, recounts: this *real* Hercules is one with the "more divine soul" of lines 1 f., it is the "freed and isolated soul" of line 15.

Thus far the paraphrase of Plotinus' words. They are rich in implications for our theme. To begin with, the "more divine" soul, which is the real Hercules, and the *eidôlon* or historical Hercules, stand in the same relation as the "man in the transcendent" and "the other man" of VI 4, 14. We have said that, subsequent to the distinction applied in that passage, Plotinus was to become more precise in his description of the "later self". The *eidôlon*-notion does clarify in what this self consists. The qualified, even adulterated presence of the real, transcendent self there can be equated with the presence of an *eidôlon*. This latter is, however, no wraith-like figure, no shade of Homeric vagueness: it is, after all, "we", in a sense, the self. If the human condition was described as ambivalent previously, its latter, historical manifestation is here implicitly integrated into its essential components. From this follows an attempt, perhaps marginal in Plotinus, but nonetheless significant, to describe the *historical personality*. For it was the life of the *eidôlon* that was, above all, Hercules' own: this because, as I 1, 12,31 ff., clarifies, Hercules "was a man of action, not a philosopher" – he was a hero plunged into the immediacy of action. The transcendent Hercules – of whom, as Plotinus remarks playfully, Homer says nothing – will, we learn, tend to forget, or to remember only passively (32,3). This seems to mean that the higher soul is selective in its retention of impressions, only the best of which pass over from the lower phase to it. Plotinus compares this to "our" – here the philosopher's – limited acceptance of the conversation and ideas of less worthy associates, chapter 31,18 ff.

Yet the philosopher that Hercules failed to be (I 1, 12,37) – or, as chapter 32,27 says, the "sage", who is "in the intelligible" and "above Hercules" – remains the exception among men. He will not remember even the fact that he has philosophized or had contemplation of the transcendent realm here below, IV 4, 1,4 f. Nor will he have any memory of his personality, *ibid.*, 2,1 ff., no notion that "the contemplator is the self", for example, "Socrates". The full implication of this absence of self-awareness is discussed

below: for the present, our concern is with the "man of action" whose worthy representative in this context is that Hercules who, in Hades, would still speak of his heroic deeds, IV 3, 32,24.

Thus memory, for Plotinus, is, as Bréhier comments, "dans l'âme mais non pas dans l'âme purifiée de tout contact avec le corps".[23] Memory, he adds, "n'a . . . sa place que dans une vie fragmentée, assaillie sans cesse d'impressions nouvelles et de besoins sans cesse renaissants".[24] Be this as it may, Plotinus dwells with emphasis upon the reality of the *eidôlon*, its contribution to selfhood, and its effectiveness as the repository of personality. Nor is he, as we have noted, insensitive to the notion that certain memories of the latter phase are retained: in other words, that personality may play a limited part in the formation of the real man *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Yet this part must not be overstressed. Ultimately, Plotinus will reject the notion of the personality's importance. For, on the world stage, the acting of individual lives is not a function of the real, interior self, but of the shadow it projects, III 2[47], 15,47 ff. Such is the *eidôlon*: whoever takes its activity for something serious is like an actor so entirely identified with his rôle that he lays aside his mask[25] and behaves *as if his action were real*. Now it is not: if Socrates takes part in the play it is as the "external Socrates".

Socrates here is the opposite of Hercules at IV 3, 27 ff. For if the latter is filled with the importance of his own exploits, it is only because, as Plotinus says, he knows "no more than to live the lower and outer life", and such a man is himself a "futility", III 2, 15,51. And yet the *eidôlon* is "we": how is this? Plotinus is here doing no more than apply the thesis of III 4, that the self *qua* soul is a spontaneously moving faculty, *freely determining* the destiny of man. If Hercules does not free himself from his *eidôlon*, his "higher soul" will be where this latter is, VI 4, 16,40 f.; in other words, he may be said not to have realized the full potentiality of his self – here symbolized by the passing of

the authentic soul into the Intelligible. But he "is" on the lower level, for what that is worth. There is, in other words, no other possible explanation of why Plotinus, at IV 3, 27,8, asserts the selfhood of the *eidôlon* than to see it as an application of the determination principle of III 4, 2.[26]

It is noteworthy that in a later passage of the same treatise on problems of the soul, IV 4, 18, Plotinus deals with the identity of that human phase which is inferior to the *eidôlon* or embodied soul – namely, the ensouled body. Has it, he asks, any force of its own, any individuality which it would be in possession of upon the soul's incoming? It has some shadow of soul and with this is a modified body.[27] This body, so modified, is the seat of pain and pleasure, which enter our awareness without affecting it: by "our" or "we" (*hêmeis*) are meant the "other soul", the remaining, higher aspects of the soul, its sensitive and reasoning parts, III 4, 2,4. That the "we" is this higher soul was established since IV 7[2]1: indeed, Plotinus here repeats a definition of the self there stressed, that "we" are the "master-principle":

IV, 7, 1,22	IV, 4, 18,14
τὸ δὲ κυριώτατον καὶ	ἡμεῖς δὲ κατὰ
αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος	τὸ κύριον

a form of definition deriving from Aristotle.[28] In this respect, he adds nothing new in the passage under consideration. What he does add, however, is a modified conception of the relation of the body to the self. We recall that, at IV 7, 1,20 ff., the idea that the body could be a part of us in any essential way was dismissed: it is no more than matter to the soul's form, or the latter's instrument.[29] Here, Plotinus, having pointed out what we are, adds that the modified body is not, however, alien to "us", to the self. For the self, he proceeds, is neither the body, nor is it purified of it; but the body is dependent on the self, attached to it, and, in a special sense, it is part of the self.

If at IV 3, 27,8 the *eidôlon*, the soul at the level of personality, which, as we have seen, survives in a certain way the death of the total man, was considered as an aspect of the

self, then Plotinus here (IV 4, 18) defines the latter in even more comprehensive terms: we, he says, are not purified of the body, it is "ours", it contributes to the totality called "self". The formula of the *Alcibiades*, shown to have been Plotinus' guide in IV 7, 1, is surpassed: the realm of emotion, of passion is integrated into the definition of the self. It is not without coincidence that the "modified body" here evoked is equated with the soul of Aristotle's *De Anima*:[30] the psychology of that treatise, based upon the substantial unity of soul and body, in which soul is the formative principle inherent in the bodily organism, has left its trace in Plotinus' detailed evaluation of the nature of the body.

Yet the modified body is assigned (with typical Platonic insistence) to a relatively low position by Plotinus, lines 16 ff. We are affected by its emotions, he says, the more, in proportion as we are weaker, not detached, seeing in body the most worthy phase of our being, the real man. The last remark is important: Plotinus believes that it is possible for man to be deluded as to his true nature. His emotional phase is, indeed, a part of his self, but it is neither the highest nor the essentially human part. The more the self penetrates into this, the more it approximates to it, to the exclusion of anything higher. Ultimately, it *is* "the man", because it is his *dominant* (III 4, 2,10), it is what he has, mistakenly, *made himself to be*.[31]

A closer analysis of the structure of the modified body follows, lines 19 ff. The affections are a state of this, which is a "conjoint and composite thing" – they cannot be states of those impassive entities, pure body and pure soul,[32] but of the conjoint of two natures, of which the lower will have but a faint trace of the higher. This conjoint is at once unity and duality, a mean, troubled, artificial and uncertain, shifting upwards and downwards in the scale between its own deficiency[33] and longing for communion with the higher.

It is a characteristic of the self that it manifests itself, at various levels, as a mean or middle phase between two extremes. This will be seen to be the case of that aspect of reasoning soul which "we" most truly are:[34] it is here the

case with the "composite", the ensouled body. The probable development – analytical, not chronological – of this factor can be traced. At III 2 [47], 8,9 ff., it is asserted that man is situated between the gods and the beasts, and that he inclines, now to the one, now to the other. The majority of men remains, however, "in the middle"; but the corrupt, like beasts, harass them. It is more than likely that consideration of the mean position of man in the hierarchy god-man-beast establishes it as appropriate, or typical, that essentially human characteristics are revealed as the *medial and mediating* tensions between conflicting and diverging opposites. It has been pointed out by Himmerich[35] that the self is "Mittel – und Mittlerinstanz zwischen Sinnlichkeit und Geist", a truth not yet fully explained by Plotinus: in the present context, however, the *motif* is apparent on a lower level. We shall return to this later on, in some detail: before passing on to a new problem, however, attention should be drawn to a passage following closely upon IV 4, 18, and curiously akin to III 2, 8,9 ff.: i.e., II 9 [33], 2,4 ff. It concerns the human soul, one part of which is ever in intelligible reality, one part concerned with the things of this world and one part in between.[36] Since the soul is one nature with many powers,[37] sometimes the whole of it is carried along with the best of itself, sometimes the worst or lowest part is degraded, and thus degrades *the middle* with it. What man was in III 2, 8 is attributed to the middle phase here: this can incline in either of two opposed tendencies. Plotinus does not specifically identify the middle phase with self (or man) in II 9, 2: but as A.H. Armstrong has pointed out,[38] it is but a step from the isolation of the peculiarities of the middle phase to its identification with the "we" or true self.[39]

Since IV 3, 27 ff. we have observed that Plotinus pays increasing attention to the reality of the historical self and its association with (and even inclusion in) the real self. It is interesting to observe how this gradually introduced notion receives formal and explicit proof in a short argument. At VI 6 [34], 15,10 ff. Plotinus asserts that Man – the real Man

– and the other living things exist in the intelligible "insofar as they have Being", and furthermore, insofar as this intelligible All is a living thing,[40] it is *complete*: even man in the realm of sense is a part of it. Likewise, every living thing, *qua living* thing, exists transcendentally in it.[41] Behind these assertions lies an argument that may be presented as follows: Man *qua* Being, living Being, is in the intelligible. Now the intelligible is a living thing, and so the complete Living-Form (*Lebewesen*): if this is so, it cannot lack any form or manifestation of life. Now historical man is alive: therefore, historical man can be said to be in the intelligible, living Reality.

The argument is unequivocal, but it raises a major problem, one created by the very hierarchy of Platonism itself, namely, if "we" can be said to be the embodied soul, the modified body, how can sensibility – the nature and activity of the senses – be related positively to man's *essentia* in Being? For if the senses are *accidentalia* of temporal man, foreign to his real self, as a Platonist might maintain, then one cannot include in the self the man of the sense realm. Plotinus was acutely aware of this problem, and he devoted a major part of one of his most comprehensive treatises to it: VI 7 [38], 1-10.[42] Not that the problem was totally foreign to the Platonic tradition, which, paradoxically, was in some respects better fitted to debate it than Aristotelianism.[43] For it was a *quaestio vexata* of Platonism since the *Parmenides* (130c) whether there were Forms of what F. M. Cornford has called "undignified things",[44] such as Hair, Clay or Dirt. In an early treatise, V 9 [5], 10,1 ff., Plotinus had denied that there were Forms of such things. We know that he was following in this the Middle Platonic tradition, as typified by Albinus.[45] His attitude will be different in the present treatise, which we must now examine in detail.

The treatise starts from the assumption that there appears to be a certain "provision" relating man to his environment, since man is provided with sense powers and organs for dealing with the latter. Is this due to a reflective, planning act of the divine creator? A consideration of the reflective act

(*logismos*, 1,20) leads to the conclusion that it, and provision, serve only where a higher, more comprehensive power is lacking, or where choice or preference are present: such terms, therefore, can be used only analogously of "the alone and one and utterly simplex" – line 39 – whose complete act (46) establishes what is appropriate. This is no planning process, for anything of God's must be "whole and entire", the future totally present in it – even if, in time, it assumes extension. The All is "a single total fact", 57: "*it contains its cause within itself.*"

Chapter 1 is clearly an application of the formally described noetic "whole" (*holon*) of VI 4 and 5 [22 and 23] to the problem of divine foresight: the latter is meaningless when all things are present in God. Plotinus now isolates one factor of this *total presence* (see the above italicized words): the presence of the cause in the intelligible essence, an inherent aspect of it, to be identified with it. As he says: "the thing and its cause are the same", chapter 2,10. Or, modifying the emphasis, "the essence of a thing is its cause" (15). Thus an explicative examination of the intelligible Form will reveal the cause inherent in it (17 ff.). Even in this visible universe (30 ff.) such coincidence of cause and being is apparent in its very totality, in the interlocking of co-existence (37), where parts are related to the whole, and where this relationship is the ground of their being.[46] The principle applies to man: of intelligible man it can, of course, be said that his essence is his *raison d'être* (chapter 2,6; cf. 11, 51 ff.). But – and this is the crux of the problem – what of historical man (56)?

Once again, it is in an application of the principle of total presence that Plotinus seeks an answer. He says that things are "beautiful" when their cause is inherent in them,[47] chapter 3,9. And, he adds, in transition to the sphere of process, *a thing is beautiful, when it is comprehensive or complete*. Now this implies its possession of its cause, as the argument suggests: Plotinus can therefore conclude syllogistically that to state a thing's cause is to state the completeness of its nature. Thus of any individual part of the

human body – eye or eyebrow – one can give its *raison d'être* by referring it to the totality of the complete body. The latter's essential integrity implies the presence of all its parts. As J. Trouillard says, "Chaque propriété est relation à l'ensemble, lui-même fondé sur sa propre vérité interne."[48]

But in the case of the human person this "vérité interne", its completeness, is due to the Form controlling its matter, due, therefore, to some intelligible, chapter 3,10 ff. But the latter, as we have seen, is one, all-embracing, "the being, the essence, the cause, all are one", 21 f. Hence we must conclude that sense-perception, peculiar to the human person, is necessarily involved in the intelligible, in virtue of the latter's completeness, 22 f. Because this intelligible essence is a "loi enveloppante et concrète",[49] man in the transcendent is not pure *nous*, sense-perception being an additional accident foreign to his nature and made upon his entry into the realm of process, 26 ff. Man here below, we might conclude, is essentially already in the transcendent.

Now this was the conclusion of a passage already discussed above.[50] There too, it was shown that the man of the sense realm, *qua* living being, was part of the Total Living Being. Likewise, the turning-point of the argument there was the *completeness* of the Intelligible Being. What was there a logically derived argument, which bypassed the problem of sense and essence, emerges in our present treatise as the complex result of a long dialectical process, which began by facing up to that very problem. Such passages serve to qualify the notion of "development" which we maintain in this work,[51] and point to the no less impressive *integrity* of some of Plotinus' notions,[52] which are already fully developed in his treatises *ab initio*.

To return to the examination of VI 7. Before he can develop the grandiose theme of the presence of all life in the Intelligible, Plotinus is arrested by the apparent contradiction between his assertion that the sense realm is in the Intelligible, and the traditionally Platonic notion that only upon the soul's *debasement* in the sense-world does this potentiality become an actuality. The exact nature of man is

thrown into confusion by his new argumentation; one must investigate, he says, not only what man in the Intelligible consists of, but also the nature of man in process, chapter 4,3. Thus the problem re-emerges into the light of Plotinus' daring identification of sense with essence.

It should, in view of the arguments developed in this book's preceding pages, come as no surprise to find that Plotinus rejects the definition of man given in the *Alcibiades*, chapter 4,10; 12 ff. It has already been observed above that he implicitly finds this definition no longer adequate.[53] But the reason here given for his rejection is novel. Such a definition, says Plotinus, is simply a λόγος ... δηλωτικὸς τοῦ ἐσομένου, it does not tell us anything about the essence of man (17 f.). It is simply descriptive of the composite of body and soul. What is sought is the λόγος πεποιηκώς, 25, the creative, psychic power constitutive of man.[54] Theiler has aptly commented on the uniquely ambivalent use of the term *logos* for definition and "Wesen" or "Wesenheit", or again (in chapter 5,9) for the creative powers of soul.[55] I suggest that Plotinus is here creatively criticizing the Platonic-Aristotelian notion of definition, in an attempt to reveal his own new concept of that notion and its relation to the psychic power typified in the discursively reasoning soul.

Man, then, is a *logos*[56] different from the soul which forms his being; more precisely, he is an act of the soul in its modified phase, chapter 5,3 ff. This modified phase of soul was its own prior to embodiment (*ibid.*, line 13); historical man is an *eidôlon* of man, a latter existence (16) – the distinction of VI 4, 14 is here maintained and modified. Man, indeed, can be said to be the *enulos logos* of a particularized soul.

It is worthwhile remarking *en passant* that apart from its function as definition the description of man as a *logos* here fulfils the essential requirements of that term, as they have been most convincingly deduced in the recent investigation of J.M. Rist.[57] *Logos*, says Rist, "means to Plotinus that aspect of Soul which by transmitting the creative Forms creates, maintains and orders the visible universe".[58] He adds

that "as Soul embraces all individual souls, so the *logos* embraces individual *logoi*."[59] Thus the *logos* of man, a link between the intelligible and the sensible, creative and ordering "visible", i.e. historical man, resembles this description. Its full function is explained in chapter 6. There (having reminded us in chapter 5,21 ff. of the more divine, undescended, "intelligible" phase of soul) Plotinus, forced by the logic of his argument to attribute to the higher that sensible realm already shown to be "in" the Intelligible, asks – how is this so?

The complex answer is formulated as follows: the soul in the transcendent perceives the *aisthêta* of that realm: A figurative phrase, we may think – but then Plotinus adds that the man of sense perceives the sensible *harmonia* of this world, and from this lowest phase (of perception) establishes the harmonic link to the *harmonia* of the Intelligible World. Thus, for example, his perception of fire "here below" is an *integral perception*, insofar as he relates it to the Fire Intellectual, which the soul in the transcendent perceives through its relation to It. Plotinus means more than a figurative explanation of intelligizing: this latter *is* perception, because it is of the one nature, though on a different level, with sense-perception: later on, he can say that "perceptions here are Intellections of the dimmer order, and the Intellections There are vivid perceptions."[60] This pre-established harmony, or unity, of two apparently conflicting orders or reality, and of the – nonetheless different – means of becoming aware of each, solves the problem formulated at chapter 3,30.

Before going on to consider the implications of this subsumption of the sensible into the Intelligible, it is worthwhile commenting on an aspect of the passage – namely, its felicitous use of *logos* as a designation for man, that is, man of the historical order. We have already noted how it corresponds, as definition and creative power, to the normal Plotinian concept of *logos*, as established by Rist.[61] Now Rist has also pointed out[62] that at III 3, 4 Plotinus distinguishes two types of *logos*, the one creative, the other

linking the things of process with higher things. This latter Rist understands "as the opposite force to the creative procession, namely the return of the emanated products to their source".[63] Above, we saw the perception of man of the sense realm described as integral insofar as it involved a linking reference to the perception of the real Fire in the Intelligible: in other words, insofar as the latter man returned to the essential completeness and vividness of his intelligible reality. And this is a function of man as *logos*. It would seem that the tendency remarked upon by Rist is illustrated strikingly in this process.

It now remains to discuss some of the notions developed in chapters 6 to 10 of the treatise. In chapter 6,9 ff. Plotinus speaks of the *degrees* of human existence – degrees related in precisely the same way as the "intelligible" and "sensible" perception he has been discussing. There are three degrees – that of man in the transcendent (in *nous*, 12), who illuminates the man of sense, who, in turn, illuminates the third man, that is, the *phytikos*. Some men, however, act by the lowest of these, others by the higher degrees – and each individual *is* that by which he acts, though he is *all* as well, for the soul is all, and acts in different subjects at different times. The passage is a recapitulation of III 4, 2,6 ff.,[64] combining, as there, the notion of a free determination of the self by itself with that of the soul's being all things, *ibid.*, 3,21 ff.[65] It was said there that we are each of us an "intelligible universe", but the phrase was unfounded, and continued so, because it could not be justified except by an appeal to Plotinus' teaching on the undescended part of the soul. Now, however, that all subsequents can be shown to inhere in the Intelligible, it is clearer why we, as living, discursively reasoning beings, can, in virtue of this power and of our sense-powers, be said to be *totally* (and not merely as *nous* or "intelligible soul") of that intelligible universe. The further relationship of the two passages is clear in Plotinus' next words: an apology for the strangeness of the notion that the *logos* of a man can come to occupy the body of an animal – this was the theme of III 4. As there, Plotinus

insists that this will only be the fate of a diseased, debased soul. For when the soul is pure and unfallen, it will "choose man and be man", 24. Human existence is willed, it is a decision, and, moreover, the decision of a morally sound soul. These texts should be added to such ones as II 9 (against the Gnostics), to emphasize the positive nature of embodiment for Plotinus, a factor which in itself justifies his searching inquiry into the nature of historical man.

How does this "willing" of human existence operate? Plotinus seems to believe that the All-Soul, as a universal *logos*, lays down a sketch or pattern (*prohypographên*, chapter 7,11) of the individual in advance, and that this is then elaborately articulated by the individual soul, which forms itself after that towards which it tends (13-15), just as the choral dancer adapts himself to the given action. Plotinus then checks the course of his thought, which has drawn him thus far from his original theme. He may well have regretted this momentary aberration, for it differs from the notion of embodiment which he has given in IV 3, 12,37; 13, 1 ff. There it was said of the soul that it descends to a recipient with which it has affinity of condition (*diathesis*), and to which it characteristically tends. Now the interesting thing is that this explanation would fit perfectly into the place taken by the above-mentioned one, for in the previous chapter we have seen that the tendency of the soul to be manifest in its dominant, appropriate act was asserted in general, and asserted of man in particular.[66] Why has Plotinus offered a variant, which gives All-Soul a share in the formation of man, and speaks of individual soul as adapting itself – from an apparently neutral prime state – to the characteristics *given it* by the model of All-Soul? Now precisely in this adaptation or working-out of detail lies the notion of the bringing to fulfilment of a potential.[67] The passage starts from the notion of an All-Soul which is all things (1. 4 f.): it, the All-Soul, must therefore be the active cause of individual things, which emerge from latency into actuality in its individual components. We may speak of a new description of the same phenomenon here: it should, furthermore, be

remarked that the passage in question affords perhaps a better account of the *original* embodiments of human individual souls, as opposed to *subsequent* embodiments of human souls dependant upon the lives which they have lived here, than the other passage, and than such accounts as were given in chapter 6 of the present treatise, and in III 4. Yet there is an inconsistency: the apparent subjection of the individual soul to the action (*drama*) imposed upon it by the All-Soul. It would seem that the metaphor of the dance, used indiscriminately here, has hindered rather than helped Plotinus, in that it suggests an *absence of freedom* on the individual's part. This was not intended: in any sense, the All, or totality, *is* the cause of the individual parts – this was established in chapters 2 and 3 of both the intelligible and sensible wholes, and stressed again in another dance-image.[68] There is, however, no connotation of individual lack of freedom in the notion of the sympathy and totality of all beings in the Total Being, a notion developed on the grand scale in IV 4, 30 ff.[69] – in our passage, on the contrary, there is such a connotation. And this is precisely why Plotinus may have dropped the matter so abruptly.

In summary, then: historical human existence is willed, by a good soul – it is a realization of essence on a lower level, "une pensée universelle qui se particularise", as Trouillard says.[70] Conversely, the characteristics of such an existence, the *sensibilia* which go to form its totality, are inherent in this essence; in fact, they are an aspect (*logos*) of its activity (*energeia*), and it, being complete, contains them. VI 7, 1-7 are the climax of that tendency to include historical man in the total definition of man, a tendency which began in IV 3, 27. And this definition is achieved by re-thinking the whole relationship of the sensible to the intelligible, of sense to essence.

Plotinus refers to the constituents of the human self in his treatise on "The Heavenly System" (II 1 [40], 5,18 ff.). The self, he says, is formed by the soul which is given by the divine beings in the heavens, and by the heavens themselves. By this soul he apparently means the soul in the universe, the

lower, creating soul (*physis*)[71] – it is, in fact, a "shadow of soul"[72] – and through it we are associated with the body. But it is not this principle which is the *basis* of the self: that is the higher soul's prerogative.[73] What follows is, however, significant. The higher soul is principle, not of our existence pure and simple, but of our excellence, 21. Why? Because, when the body is already constituted, it "comes", bringing with itself some small trace from the realm of its reason (*logismos*) to the being in question.

There is, thus, a clear distinction between the constitution of the body and the faculty of *logismos* of the higher soul. In IV 4,18 the former, as we have seen,[74] was said to be a part of the self. Plotinus seems to assert this with more confidence here: one might conclude from the distinction he draws in line 21 that the "lower" soul is cause "of our existence". What of the higher, and why is it the cause of "our excellence"? There would seem to be an approach here towards Plotinus' eventual identification of the "higher soul" with *logismos*. Now at V 1[10], 11,1 ff. it is asserted that it is the function of the soul to "reason (*logizomenês*) upon the right and good, for reasoning (*logismou*) is an enquiry into the rightness and goodness of this rather than that". This soul is "separate and not mingled into body, within the first Intellectual", *ibid.*, 10,16. It is the decision-making, selective faculty (V 3, 2,6 ff.), and this is, in turn, because of its situation *between* the intelligible and sense realms, for at this point historical man must decide his course of action.

The higher soul, therefore, constitutes the man, for it is an *ethical* faculty, freely deciding in what way the potential of the self may be realized. Now such a faculty was known to us from III 4, 2 and VI 7, 6, but it had not been identified beyond its being an activity of soul. In the present passage, it is identified with *logismos*, but tentatively. Later texts will assert explicitly that the decision-making faculty, which is self at its truest, is none other than the *psychê logizomenê* (V 3, 1 ff.; I 1). For the present, it is important to remember that what is often described as the "normal" definition of the self – as if it were merely a definition of it *qua* essence (*tou*

einai aitia) – is more than that: it is a *normative* (*tou eu einai . . . aitia*) definition of the person's free power of determination, which has been slowly and carefully developed from within the movement of Plotinus' thought.

Let us now turn to one of the texts in which the self and the *psychê logizomenê* are unequivocally identified, and described in some detail. V 3 [49], 1 ff. deals with the self-knowledge of *nous*, but chapter 2,1 ff. preludes this with the query: has the soul self-knowledge, and what would the knowing principle in it be, and how would it operate? It is observed that the *aisthêtikon* of soul deals with objects *external* to itself, and that its *logizomenon* deals with the representations coming from perception (*aisthêsis*), and *judges* these. It may, likewise, observe the "impressions" (*typoi*) coming from *nous*, and it can exercise the same power in regard to these as it may in relation to sense *typoi*. What is here implied is the *mean* or *middle* position of the *logizomenon*, between sense and intelligence, a position later referred to explicitly when the self is described as "the mid-point between two powers, between the sensitive principle, inferior to us, and the intellectual principle superior", 3,38. This faculty, because of is *liaison* rôle, will not only judge; it will also be the repository of human understanding and of memory (2,11 ff.). The latter is explained as the understanding "adaptation" of new impressions to ones already held: it is described graphically in 3,1 ff. Now it was observed above that, on the one hand, the self is conceived of as a *mean* or *middle* existent, a "Mittel- und Mittlerinstanz"[75] – this was implicit in such texts as II 9, 2. What was there an *unidentified* aspect of soul is here (a) equated with the *logizomenon*, and (b) related, as we shall see, to the self or *hêmeis*. And, on the other hand, we have commented upon the fact that memory, which constitutes the historical personality, exercised a fascination for Plotinus at IV 3, 27 ff., and that he there included the *eidôlon*, its repository, in the self.[76] These aspects, the mid-point and memory, which Plotinus, it would seem, was determined to integrate into a complete account of the self – in spite of the

difficulties involved – are now subsumed into a coherent, unified argument: the progress in elucidation of thought is considerable.

Before answering, with Plotinus, the initial question as to whether this aspect of soul has self-knowledge, it is appropriate to comment on the judging faculty of the *logizomenon* – for the power of determination has clearly been isolated as typical of the self. In the present text, Plotinus attempts to find a basis for this power. We have already noted[77] that at V 1, 11,1 ff. it was suggested that the *psychê logizomenê* reasons upon the right and good: the explanation given there is that there is some permanent criterion of what is right in us – this is said to be *nous*, line 6. The same basis for the soul's power of discretion is advanced in our text. Plotinus says that if the understanding (*dianoia*) speaks from within itself when it recognizes Socrates on the strength of his goodness, it is because "it contains within itself a standard (*kanôn*) of good"; this in turn is the effect of the irradiation of *nous* upon it. Thus Plotinus explains the canon or criterion as the presence of the higher power of *nous* in the discursive soul – he has, in a sense, translated the ethical aspect of the Platonic Form into the language of his own thought, yet without sacrificing the finely nuanced notion of the self's power to determine, not only for better, but – in proportion, we might say, as this higher power is less effective in us – for worse, upon degrees of action and existence below the recognizable human – a faculty based, as has been seen,[78] no less on the Theory of Forms than on the unicity of soul which is potentially all things.

Having spoken of the "traces of *nous*" which the *logizomenon* receives, Plotinus asks: why is the latter not simply *nous*? This query had been implied already at chapter 2,14 ff. There the *logizomenon* is described, in its powers of memory and understanding, as the νοῦς ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς.[79] Plotinus asks if this latter has introversion and self-knowledge. If it has, he continues, we must (a) show in what way it differs from *nous*, and (b) show to what degree it has self-knowledge (for it must differ in its degree of self-

knowledge from *nous*).

Now in V 3, 2 Plotinus' first answer seems to be that introversion is reserved for *nous* (16), since the *logizomenon* or *dianoêtikon,* rather than being introvert, exercises its understanding on external impressions (23 ff.). Now it would appear to be precisely this external orientation which characterizes the *psychic* nature of the faculty, "because all the activities mentioned are within the scope of a reasoning faculty, and reasoning is characteristically the function of the Soul", chapter 3,16 ff. This faculty has not the exclusive self-concentration of *nous*: "we hold that observation of self and of the content of self must belong to Intellectual Principle." It can therefore be attributed only to Soul, but as an intellectual function of this latter. There is, says Plotinus, no objection to saying that *nous* unalloyed (*katharos*) is in the soul, but that does not mean that it is a phase of it. In fact, it is not of the soul, but it is *ours*.

What do these words imply? In the first place, they stress that what is "ours" reaches beyond the limits of soul. The notion "ours", closely related to that of self, is introduced to reinforce, as it were, the difference between *nous* and the *logizomenon*: by excluding the latter from *nous*, Plotinus is saying, we are not excluding *nous* from the self's scope. A notion of the self is introduced here that may *include nous*, but *is not nous*: "we" are *kat'ekeinon*, not it, 31. Strictly speaking, the self is that which reasons and thinks the thoughts in the understanding:[80] it is a mean, as has already been observed, between two powers, and, insofar as it is a *logizomenon*, it is "the soul at its highest", *kyrion tês psychês*. The latter phrase is a by now familiar description of the self,[81] but while it elsewhere means no more than the higher aspects of the soul, it is here identified with discursive reason. Thus many strands of argument unite here in explicit form: self as mid-point, self as memory, self as determination, self as master-principle, all seen now as psychic functions on the level of *logismos* or *dianoia*.

Thus Plotinus shows us the difference between *nous* and *logismos*. He can now turn to the second problem, the

question asked at chapter 2,1 f., concerning the degree of the latter's self-knowledge. There is a first attempt to distinguish this from the self-knowledge of *nous* at chapter 4,3 ff. Plotinus offers three types of self-knowledge, of which we take the first ("understanding all other things in virtue of this [i.e. *nous*] being present, visible to us in all its wonder") to refer to the self-knowledge of the *logizomenon*, for it is precisely in the light of *nous* as chapter 3,10 ff. says, that we know all other things, the externals.[82] In lines 8 ff. he explains himself. This type of self-knowledge, he says, is awareness of the nature of the soul's reflective power. It would be unlikely that the understanding were unaware that it has understanding, or that it judges, or that the criteria of its judgement derive from *nous*, or that the latter is a principle higher than itself, *ibid.*, 14 ff.

This awareness of its derivation from *nous*, of its being a secondary *eikôn nou*, a repository of the Forms, is the very mode of the self's self-knowledge. In a sense, Plotinus has elaborated the description of the self only to show that it is, and can be, surpassed by its Prior: the soul, he says, knows itself only as belonging to something else, chapter 6,3. It may be understood as the image in our historical process whereby the archetypal self-knowledge of *nous* can be grasped, *ibid.*, 16 ff. The image is *didactic*, effective in that part of the soul which is "in some respects intellective", a "type of *nous*", or which "holds its particular power through and from *nous*". As a reason-principle (*logos*, 26), this has self-knowledge by its kinship with *nous*: it knows what it sees and is aware of this knowledge (23 f.) – were it what it affirms, it would possess self-knowledge, but as its affirmation derives from above, it is rather a *pointer* to absolute self-knowledge, to which the self attains by transposing this *eikôn* to the realm of real *nous*, 28 ff. Thus the self-knowledge of the *dianoêtikon* is not merely the simple understanding of the latter's nature, functions and place, which this naturally has: it is, more importantly, insofar as its inherent deficiencies suggest the completeness of real self-knowledge, the historically effective propaedeutic to the latter.

A subsequent passage returns to the notion of the self as a formative, elevating faculty, enabling man in the historical process to transcend that process. Referring to the Platonic account[83] of the influence of the stars in shaping our personality, Plotinus asks what remains as our real self (*hêmeis*), if we are so bound by necessity, II 3 [52], 9,14 ff. The self, he answers, is what "we" in truth are, since nature has given us the power of controlling our sensibilities. "We in truth" can clearly be equated with "soul at its highest", *kyrion tês psychês*, of V 3, 3,37 and other passages:[84] that it can be called the ruling faculty is clear on the basis of such passages as II 1, 5,20 ff. and V 3, 2,7 ff., where its decision-making faculty, superior to the sensitive soul and acting in accord with *nous*, is delineated. This faculty or power of self expresses, says Plotinus, "virtue the unconquerable", *adespotos aretê*, which God has given us:[85] it enables us to free ourselves from this sphere, from all the accretions that go to make up the "composite", that "body ensouled"[86] in which the bodily element dominates, only a trace of the soul being effectively present. The self, that other soul,[87] achieves the impulse to elevate and to transcend the "everyday" self, 25.

This account closely resembles that of II 1, 5,18 ff.[88] The idea that in the faculty which "we" are resides the virtue (*aretê*) necessary to our improvement was there expressed in the form that our self was cause, not of our existence, but of our excellence. Similarly, the rejection of the "body ensouled" here is paralleled by that of the "shadow of soul" there. There would appear to be a refusal to include the "everyday" self in the self as a whole which we found at IV 3, 27 ff., VI 6, 15 and VI 7, 1 ff., in these two passages. Have we to do with a rejection by Plotinus of a line of thought elaborated by him? It should be remarked in the first place that in each case we are dealing with *argumenta ad hominem*. Plotinus is defending the concept of an independent self against astrological influences in the soul's formation, which would imply a predetermination of our historical life: he must seem to attack the inclusion of the

eidôlon in the self, still more the modified body. But that it is no more than a matter of seeming can be seen in his subsequent words at II 3, 9,27 ff. Bereft of the higher world, says Plotinus, man lives fate-bound, sunk in the system, a part of it. For "every human Being is twofold (*dittos*); there is the composite (*synamphoteron*), and there is the real self (*autos*)", and, as body, we are subject to the All (36). In other words, as if aware of the possible impression of inconsistency he might be giving, Plotinus says: there are two aspects from which one may observe the human person, and the "self" of the historical process is, as we have shown, one of them. But the *real* self, because free, and a master-principle, an ethical no less than an ontological category, as III 4 and VI 7, 6 have stressed, is the more significant object of our investigation. Of it, we can say that it is *par excellence* the self (*autos*). Plotinus later speaks of those men who are born part of the All and of the realm of exteriority, and he says that they are "hardly, or not at all, themselves (*autoi*)". But those who master all this and transcend it, by an impulse "towards the Higher, to what is outside even the soul", save what is noble and primevally good in their psychic nature, chapter 15, 13 ff.

Plotinus will find no more satisfying formula to include both aspects of historical man in the self than that of "every human Being is twofold (*dittos*)". However, the measure of his advance on traditional Platonic identifications of self and soul, without further elaboration, is apparent precisely in his concern not to delimit the boundaries of self. His last word on the matter is at I 1 [53], 10,5 ff., "This We, then, covers two distinct notions (*ditton*); sometimes it includes the brute-part, sometimes it transcends this." Here there is clear assent to the fulness of self and to the different concepts one is forced to form of it. But a more detailed examination of I 1 is called for.

At the beginning of this book the importance of the treatise I 1 as a systematically conceived propaedeutic to the thought of Plotinus was stressed. We suggested that it evoked themes which have, in the previous pages, been shown to

have occupied Plotinus throughout his writings. If philosophy begins with self-knowledge, then the question "what is the self? " will be primal. We must now consider I 1 from another viewpoint: as a climax to Plotinus' answer to this question. It is the last occasion on which he deals with it, in a treatise written at the end of his life. He may already have been ill of the disease from which he died: in any case, Porphyry tells us that he received the treatise in a batch delivered shortly before his master's death.[89] Thus the ailing philosopher grapples once again with the precise description of the self, even of the earthly historical self.

That chapters 2-7 of the treatise are devoted to determining the faculty of man's sensitive phase should come as no surprise to one familiar with the place accorded to the *eidôlon*[90] or "modified body"[91] in Plotinus' thought. The man at this level, compounded, as chapter 7,1 ff. explains, of the modified body and a light[92] from soul proper, "forms a distinct principle, the Animate (*zôon*)", in which sense-perception is active. But what of the self, "How have We sense-perception? " Plotinus' answer is familiar: "we" are not separate from the Animate, although, man's essence, being a manifold, contains many higher faculties. Man is many (chapter 9,7), he says, recalling the soul's multivalence, which is the basis for differences in human types.[93] But it is the faculty which discerns the impressions from sense-perception – these impressions are intelligibles[94] – in other words, the *logizomenon* – or, as Plotinus says here, that in which "reason and opinion" reside – that, as V 3 had established, is the true self, chapter 7, 16 f. In words reminiscent of the description of V 3, Plotinus says of this faculty that "in many of its manifestations it is the assimilation and reconciliation of the outer to the inner," 9,22.

Plotinus has to deal with the objection inherent in this account of the self as a type of soul, albeit reasoning soul (10,1 ff.): namely, that if the soul is the self, and the self is subject to the experiences of the composite, then the soul would appear to be subject to the passions, whereas it is a cardinal thesis of Plotinus' thought that the soul is *impassive,*

ibid.[95] Plotinus' answer is careful: the self, he argues, is not exclusively soul, the couplement (*koinon*) is also "a member of this total We (*hêmôn*)"; self can be described *either* as the man-animal *or* as the soul above this modified body. This answer has already been commented upon.[96] Ultimately, it suggests a failure to provide a single, all-embracing formula for the self. As Trouillard says of man, "il ne peut se fixer," there is a "contradiction qui est au coeur de l'homme", he is "polyvalence et oscillation perpétuelle".[97] But if there is a problem here, there is nonetheless a *comprehensive description*, including what may even be considered as *accidentalia*, of each level of the self. Plotinus has remained faithful to the Aristotelian notion of definition, of which he approves, saying that a good definition should include most of the defined object's accidentals.[98]

Another section of the treatise raises a problem already observed in Plotinus. The higher principles, those formative of *nous* and the higher soul, act upon us, he says, when they attain to the *mid-point* of soul, 11,3 f. Thus the receptive self is the soul's mean term – we might add, between its intellectual and generative faculties.[99] Yet, Plotinus queries, is not the self also that phase above the mid-point? Yes, he replies, but only when we "lay hold of it (*antilêpson*)", and are aware of it actively, 11,5. In other words, the self becomes that which it potentially is: when the mid-point is directed towards a phase higher or lower than itself a new aspect of man's nature is thereby realized. This assertion repeats, on the one hand, the observations of III 4, 2,6 ff. and VI 7, 6,17 ff. on the self-determination of man as an activity (*energeia*). But there is a further element to the account here, and it is related to the notion of awareness connoted by the word *antilêpsis*. The passage bears a striking resemblance to V 1, 12,5 ff., where the notion of consciousness, as distinct from soul, is introduced. There it is asserted that an experience only enters the self when it enters our sense-perception, and so the "entire soul". We are not a part of the soul, but "the total", and "knowledge. . . . depends upon transmission and perception (*antilêpsis*)."[100]

From such passages it would be tempting to conclude too much, to see, for example, a determination of the self as being dependent on the level of consciousness operative at the time. It was this tendency in P.O. Kristeller's[101] book that K.-H.Volkmann-Schluck, in particular, warns against.[102] The theme is taken up by W. Himmerich.[103] Their objections are to be taken seriously, but the above-quoted passages undoubtedly do stress the significant relation of "empirisches Bewusstsein" to the empirical self. We might formulate the relation as follows: (and hereby we do justice at once to Kristeller's thesis, and to the objections of his critics) there is *no* conditioning of self by the act of consciousness, for self, the vehicle of consciousness, would necessarily exist before that act; there is, however, the assertion that only insofar as a faculty is consciously operative, can it be said to be of the self. The self is not a static *datum*, even if it exists potentially in its entirety (11,7): it is essentially a faculty of conscious self-determination, a mid-point which can be directed towards the higher or the lower, 11,6.[104]

There is one final passage of the treatise to be commented upon here. At chapter 13,1 ff. Plotinus attempts to answer a question posed at chapter 1,9 f.: what is the principle which investigates the whole matter in dispute, in other words, what is the philosophical organ proper? Plotinus' answer is that it is the self, but "by the soul". He then explains this "by the soul": it does not mean "by possessing soul", but rather "by the fact of being Soul". That is to say, if the investigating faculty, discursive reason (*dianoia* or *logismos*), is soul, and so operative, it is the "intellective soul (*psychê noera*)",6. Now our intellection is twofold—there is the intellection of *nous* upon us, and there is the intellection of soul. And it is precisely the latter which is observable in the investigation of the nature of the self. But the self *is* that soul, as V 3 and other texts—including the present one—have stressed. Therefore, it is through a form of self-knowledge that the nature of the self has to be investigated. What exactly this self-knowledge consists in, has been described in V 3, 1-6.

Appendix to Chapter 2

νοῦς ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς, V 3, 2,14 (see above, p. 42).

The ambiguity of language inherent in this phrase is closely related to the conceptual difficulty of distinguishing, in Plotinus, between the higher, intellectual part of soul – for him, "undescended" from *nous* – and the hypostasis *nous* proper. Thus, at V 1, 10,12, Plotinus speaks of both faculties as *nous*: the one, νοῦς ... ὁ μὲν λογιζόμενος, clearly being the secondary *nous* of Soul, the other, ὁ δὲ λογίζεσθαι παρέχων (*sc.* τῇ ψυχῇ), being the higher, which is not itself λογιζόμενος. (cf. VI 9, 5,5 ff.). Now such difficulties as might arise from too exclusive a division between *nous* and *psychê* would seem to be already obviated by the subsumption of the sensible, and *a fortiori* the psychical, into the intelligible, in VI 7, 1-10. There we learn not to distinguish in absolute terms between what are essentially levels of a unified hierarchy. But that teaching does not solve the present problem. *Nous* and *psychê are* two distinct levels of reality: but in the above passages they appear to be identical in being and purpose. And that is going further than speaking of the subsumption of the lower into the higher.

There is a text where Plotinus seems to express himself more felicitously, thus perhaps overcoming the linguistic confusion of the double *nous*. The text in question is I 1, 8,1 ff., where Plotinus distinguishes between αὐτὸν τὸν νοῦν, 2, and the νοῦν ... ἣν ἡ ψυχὴ ἕξει ἕξιν οὖσαν τῶν παρὰ τοῦ νοῦ. The usage of the term ἕξις to describe this faculty appears to be unique in Plotinus: it occurs here in his penultimate treatise, and may be seen as an effort to establish the true value of the *nous* active in the higher *psychê*. Now it is interesting that Proclus takes up this term: *In Tim.* II. 140. 21 distinguishes between the νοῦς οὐσιώδης (=ἄυλος, θεῖος,

20) and the νοῦς which is ὡς ἕξιν τῆς ψυχῆς *Ibid.* II. 313. 1 clarifies: τριχῶς γὰρ ὁ νοῦς· πρῶτος μὲν ὁ θεῖος, οἷος δὴ καὶ ὁ δημιουργικός, δεύτερος δὲ ὁ μετεχόμενος ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς, οὐσιώδης καὶ αὐτοτελής, τρίτος δὲ ὁ καθ' ἕξιν, δι' ὃν ἡ ψυχὴ νοερά ἐστιν. This text is explicit: of these aspects of the *nous*, we might say that the second is that in which the self participates insofar as it intelligizes (it is the purpose of the third chapter of this book to investigate the implications of this) – Plotinus would call it the "undescended" part of soul (this theory was unacceptable to Proclus, cf. e.g. *In Tim.* III. 333. 28). The third aspect of *nous* would be that constitutive of soul's noetic (intelligible) nature, that is, what the soul owes to having *nous* as its Prior. It is, in a sense, a manifestation of *nous*, but it is primarily a *psychic* manifestation.

3. The Self and Nous (Theos)

In that early treatise on the soul's immortality, IV 7, in which, as we have seen,[1] Plotinus speaks for the first time of the nature of the self, there is a passage, chapter 10, dealing with what he calls the soul's "diviner nature".[2] It has already been shown[3] that the soul is "real Being": its immaterial nature, without tangible attributes, is also an indication of this "diviner" aspect. There are, however, continues Plotinus, other proofs that it, like every divine and real Being (5), "possesses a life benificent and wise". He takes the example of a soul that has not been mastered by the emotions, the soul, we would say, of a "detached" person, and asks us to accept that it "demonstrates that all evil is accretion, alien, and that in the purged soul the noble things are immanent, wisdom and all else that is good, as its native store". Now this soul possesses wisdom and virtue, things "divine", and what possesses these must be itself divine, in that it has *a capacity for the divine by reason of its kinship and identical substance (homoousion) with the divine*.[4] Plotinus, indeed, is prepared to take this identity of substance so far that he claims that the only difference between man in a purified state, and the higher (20), is that the former is associated with a body. In this he is consistent with the tendency of chapter 1 of the treatise to see in body the *matter* or *instrument* that is in no way constitutive of the self.[5]

Continuing (27), Plotinus remarks that to assure ourselves of the truth of what he has been saying, we must look at ourselves in our purified, unalloyed state: by this means, we see ourselves become a nous (32 ff.), ἀιδίῳ τὸ ἀίδιον κατανοοῦντα, πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, κόσμον καὶ αὐτὸν νοητὸν καὶ φωτεινὸν γεγενημένον, ἀληθείᾳ καταλαμπόμενον τῇ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὃ πᾶσιν ἐπιλάμπει τοῖς νοητοῖς ἀλήθειαν.[6] In such cases one can speak of a *divinization* of

the soul: Plotinus (38 f.) reads into a phrase of Empedocles the soul's becoming "an immortal God", one with the Supreme, 39 ff. It is not (43) by any activity directed towards the external that the soul "sees" the virtues, but rather "it learns them of its own nature, in its contact with itself, in its intellectual grasp of itself, seeing deeply impressed upon it the images of its primal state," 44 ff. Plotinus concludes this passage with an image of living gold: the dross in it would keep it in ignorance of itself, only unalloyed can it know and admire itself in its perfection.

The text gives the impression of being comprehensive, and for that reason it can serve not only as a beginning to our present inquiry – whose main themes it summarizes – but also as a yardstick for measuring Plotinus' eventual development of the notions here mentioned. Let us observe the cardinal points made: (1) the soul's identity of substance (*homoousion*) with *nous* – for if it is identical with the divine, in its purity, and it sees itself (32 ff.) in this purity, as a *nous*, then it must be one with *nous*, indeed, it is itself *nous*; (2) the implied "explanation" of the soul's withdrawal from the historical process by means of stressing its essential affinity with the divine, as *nous*; (3) the suggestion that self-knowledge, obtainable only in the unalloyed state of "detachment", will be essentially that of the identical knower and known – and so only possible at the level of nous, of man's primal, former state, 48; (4) finally, the notion that this process is equivalent to a divinization of man. From these points emerge the following considerations: Plotinus speaks of an *original self*, detached, intelligible in character; with what consistency does he describe this? How is this self related to the concept of the "we" developed in the last chapter of this book? Is it, for example, accurate to speak of it as "man", in view of the apparent divinization involved? Finally, does unity with the divine as *nous* preclude the *individuality of the self* at this level, or can we speak of individual existence in *nous*? These considerations will now be dealt with: the survey of relevant texts will once again be chronological. The problem of reflexion, of the exact nature

of self-knowledge at *nous* level, will be treated in a separate section of this chapter.[7]

We should, at the outset, remind ourselves of an axiom of Plotinian thought that has direct bearing upon the present discussion. At V 2 [11], 2,1 ff., the principle of hierarchy (*taxis*), in which each level retains its characteristic "position" in spite of the progression from it, is mentioned, and Plotinus adds an important qualification to it: "on the other hand, every being is in identity with its prior as long as it holds that contact." In other words, the effect resides in and is not separated from the cause. Thus the soul of dead vegetal matter "goes" whence it "came"; or, accurately speaking, it is always in its principle, *ibid.*, lines 13 ff. Similarly, the higher phases of soul are "in" each other, and so on, until the level of *nous* is reached, 19. This presence of soul in *nous* can be described as *virtual*: when it is actualized, the soul can be said to act as *nous*. There is here ground for the statement of IV 7, 10,19 that soul is of identical substance with *nous*. Before passing on to the texts which deal more specifically with our problems, further reminder should be given of the description of soul as an intelligible universe at III 4 [15], 3,22; 6,22. By what is highest in us, says Plotinus, we are linked to the intelligible, and we are permanently in that higher sphere. In other words – and here the "intelligible universe" of IV 7, 10,35 is re-echoed – there is substantial evidence that from the beginning of his literary activity Plotinus had a clear conception of the original self resident in *nous*.[8]

At I 2 [19], 6,1 ff. Plotinus says that our concern is to be not merely without fault, but to be God. If there is any unfree (in the context, "sinful") activity, the human subject is twofold, God and *daimôn*, or rather, God with another, conjoined nature. If, on the other hand, there is no such involuntary accretion, he is "God unmingled", but "a God of those that follow upon The First". Man's self (*autos*, 7) is that which "came from the transcendent", and "the essential man (*to kath' hauton* 'das seinem Selbst Entsprechende', Harder) is There, once the primal excellence is restored."

That is to say, man's essential self is in the transcendental, the intelligible.

In its very wording the text is relevant to our queries. The *motif* of divinization is predominant: the real self is in the Supreme, what we witness here is the association of this self with a lower phase. How seriously are the words "to be God" to be taken? One factor of importance is the context of the treatise as a whole, for it starts as a commentary on the Platonic text[9] of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. Now it was observed of the "immortal God" of IV 7, 10,39 that it was an *applied* phrase of Empedocles: we must reckon with the possibility that here, too, Plotinus is interpreting, or freely using a canonical text. Furthermore, as Harder has shown,[10] the limited sense in which Plato speaks of ὁμοίωσις (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν) is irrevelant for Plotinus. Nor was the axiom a stranger to pre-Plotinian ethics: as Harder says elsewhere, "Für die Ethik des Platonismus seit Eudoxos, Theon von Smyrna, Gaios und Albinos war diese Maxime das Feldgeschrei."[11] So that we can say that, in general, Plotinus' statement is neither new, nor, at first sight, startlingly formulated. He is, however, curiously precise in his description of man's divine essence. Man, detached or transcendent, is "God", but man involved in conflict here and now is twofold, god and *daimôn*. What is the significance of *daimôn* here? If we bear in mind the traditional Greek philosophical concept of *daimôn* as a half-divine, half-human being,[12] Plotinus may seem to be suggesting that in the historical self, side by side with the transcendent, true part, is to be found a compound, not totally alienated from the divine, nor yet entirely mortal: such an existent would seem to tally with our description of the self in the previous chapter.[13] But the usage of *daimôn* is nonetheless strange: compare III 4, 6,1 ff., where man, when good, is called a *daimôn*, or – Plotinus adds correctively – his *daimôn* is *theos*, that is, the One. In the present passage, however, man as *daimôn* implies imperfection, man's double, impure nature. The *locus classicus* for the relation of *daimôn* and man is VI 7, 6,26 ff. — ποιεῖ (*sc.* ἡ ψυχή) δὲ καὶ δαίμονα πρότερον οὖσα ὁμοειδὴς τῇ ⟨ἣ⟩ ἄνθρωπον· καὶ ὁ πρὸ

αὐτῆς δαιμονιώτερος, μᾶλλον δὲ θεός, καὶ ἔστι μίμημα θεοῦ δαίμων εἰς θεὸν ἀνηρτημένος, ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος εἰς δαίμονα. οὐ γὰρ λέγεται θεός, εἰς ὃν ὁ ἄνθρωπος. ὁμοειδής: the similarity of nature in the soul which creates the *daimôn* and man would seem to justify our text's close relationship of man to *daimôn*: but there is in this passage a clear differentiation between the levels of god, *daimôn* and man, all real existents in their own right. The ambiguity of I 2, 6 may arise from the ever-present tension in Plotinus' thought between its objectively identifiable categories, on the one hand, and its overriding ethical motivation, *apparently* destructive of such categories, as typified in such texts as I 2, 6, on the other. In the latter case, one cannot speak of a confusion of language: a real experience is validly expressed. In the present text, the "deification" of man, seen in his historical phase as still partly "daimonic", need not mean that Plotinus is *deliberately* insisting upon the dehumanization, strictly speaking, of the self in the transcendent.

Among the imprecision of language there is, however, one apparently very precise term, the *to kath' hauton* of line 8, which, if we accept Harder's rendering, means "that which corresponds to the self" at the intelligible level. Now *autos* (7) seems to be used by Plotinus, consciously, in reference to the self, the identifiable, historical "Socrates". But when he turns to speak of the "higher" man he qualifies his first term *autos* by the *to kath' hauton* – by that principle of identity in the transcendent which corresponds to the man we know as "Socrates" here on earth. This qualification, incidentally, would seem to corroborate our above conclusion that the *human* self is nonetheless maintained at the transcendental level, despite Plotinus' figurative talk of divinization.

Similar arguments might be applied in the case of another passage dealing with man in the transcendent, VI 4 [22], 14,16 ff. Here the words "Before we had our becoming here we existed There, men other than now, some of us gods" are problematical. Who are the "gods" who become embodied?

Let us first of all delimit the possibilities: taking the text of I 2, 6,6, we can say that the "gods" in question "follow upon The First". But what "gods" are brought to birth? Precisely the men who, as intelligences, can be described in their truest self as "gods". It is probably advisable to recall the Plotinian belief in reincarnation here, to remember that some souls will have excelled themselves in a previous life, and will have attained to that degree of inward-tending perfection that enables them to be described as *theoi*. It is perhaps these which Plotinus here foresees as men of prime example in a future period of embodiment. That the treatise III 4 says nothing of them need not surprise us – the treatise is patchy, incomplete and obscure in style. However, we can assume that the "gods" here referred to are akin to the "good man" of that treatise, chapter 6,1 ff.

The notions of "becoming man" and of dehumanization are used in a special sense in a further passage, V 8 [31], 7,31 ff. The question of the relation of the individual to the intelligible All or Whole occurs here – it will be dealt with later on in this chapter. For our present purposes it should be noted that the act of *becoming man* is an "apostasy" from the intelligible All, and that *vice versa* "ceasing to be man . . . he soars aloft. . ." Whatever the implications about individuality in these words, "man" here can surely not mean any more than the man of process, the historical conjoint. It is this man, the "other man" of VI 4,14, who is to be shed in the return to entirety with the whole. Again it would be an unduly literal interpretation which would see here a loss of selfhood, meaning human identity, in the return to transcendence.

There is a close resemblance between the words just quoted and V 3 [49], 4,10 f., where Plotinus says that man knows himself "by *nous*, with which he becomes identical". He does so, "as no longer man, but as a being that has become something other through and through". There can be little doubt that "man" here is equivalent to the "we" of chapter 3,31 ff. If the passage seems to distinguish even more explicitly than the foregoing one between intelligible

existence and "human" existence, it does so only to bring out the *identity of the self* at both levels: "the self (*autos*) becomes *nous*," *ibid.*, line 29. In other words, while we maintain, on the one hand, that Plotinus does not wish us to believe that "becoming *nous*" is a process of *depersonalization* of the human person, it is well to note, on the other hand, that his persistent identification of the transcendent self with God and the historical self with man allows him to isolate the notion common to both levels, namely, the notion of *self (autos)* or *identity*. This would appear to persist, in spite of the linguistic ambiguities concerning its divine or human characteristics. In fact, in chapter 8 of the same treatise, there is evidence that Plotinus could remain restrained in his concept of intelligible man. He says there that soul, an *eidôlon* (9), receives the vision which is light from its superior *nous*; it becomes "intellective" (23), and it derives an "intellective life" (34) from it. When it intelligizes it becomes "god*like* and *nous-like*" (47), its vision of *nous* is achieved by means of "that within itself which is most closely resemblant" to *nous* (53 ff.). One should note here the explicit maintenance of the *psychic* identity of the self, which *is like*, but does not become *nous*: we are reminded of the Plotinian teaching, itself prone to ambiguous phrasing,[14] on the *psychê noera*. "We" (44) know *nous* only by means of it (*di'autou*): this is the rationalized, objective account of what is elsewhere more flamboyantly evoked. One should not forget such passages in responding to Plotinus' use of language on other occasions.

In summary, let it be said that no overwhelming evidence for a "dehumanization" process emerges from the passages reviewed – if anything, a reassertion of the value of the self as a principle of identity at several levels is to be observed. But in our development of this sub-theme we have neglected texts dealing more generally with man at *nous*-level, and to these we must now return.

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that the subsumption of the sensible into the intelligible was one of the remarkable features of VI 7 [38], 1-10.[15] Nonetheless,

these chapters stress on more than one occasion the important distinction of levels of human existence. At chapter 6,9 ff., the "man in the transcendent", equivalent to "Man in *nous*, containing the Man that existed before any man", 11, is said to illuminate the second (= *aisthêtikos*), who in turn "illuminates" the third type, the *phytikos*. It is to be understood that all these types can, and, indeed, *must* co-exist in the one man. But there is no doubt that the first man in the Intelligible is the pre-eminent: "The higher Man, above this sphere, rises from the more godlike soul, a soul possessed of a nobler humanity and brighter perceptions," chapter 5,21 ff. Its relation to the body is indirect, through the intermediary, lower soul, "which uses the body directly", whereas it, "poised above . . . touches body only through that intermediary". It is of a different order than historical man, chapter 9,7. Elsewhere, Plotinus says the same, III 2 [47], 7,6: if one were to inquire after the "finest type of human being known here", he asserts, one would certainly not demand that he prove of the same calibre as the "man in *nous*".[16]

These phrases confirm the present writer's impression that Plotinus consistently maintained his belief in the "intelligible self" as the archetypal individual, and the goal of the individual's ethical striving. There is no real change in his view apparent in the treatises. In view of the notion discussed earlier – whether becoming *nous* implied a *real* divinization of man – it may be well to stress the obvious here, and say that in VI 7, and at III 2, 7, Plotinus leaves no doubt over the naming of the intelligible self as man, *anthrôpos*.

It should be recalled that the first seven chapters of VI 7 [38], particularly chapters 4 and 5, were found significant in the previous chapter of this book in that they related the sensible and the intelligible in a unique manner, precluding all dualism, and seeing in historical man the realization of an intelligible essence on a lower level. The intermediary of the realization was called *logos*, the creative, constitutive power (*energeia*) of soul.[17] This should now be applied to our growing understanding of the *transcendent* nature of man. Its

relevance to our present considerations may best be illustrated by a passage akin to VI 7, 4-5, but more explicit in its insistence on the element of transcendence in the *logos*-motif. At VI 3 [44], 15,28 ff., Plotinus turns, in the midst of speculation on the concepts of "similarity and dissimilarity" and their relation to "quality", to make the observation that man's essence (*to ti einai*) is in his *logos*. This essence, he continues, is not to be confused with the "sensible substance", a combination of Quality, Matter and Quantity, but really a *quale*, a *poion, ibid.*, lines 25 f. That which is perfected in man's bodily nature is a mere image (*eidolôn*) of the *logos*; in fact, a *quale*, a *poion ti*. So historical man, we may infer, is not an essence – and Plotinus corroborates our inference in his next words. Consider, he says, that the real man is the visible, "everyday" Socrates: yet we call his portrait by the name of "Socrates". Similarly, it is the *logos* which constitutes Socrates, whereas we call the Socrates we see by this name, although it is in fact a likeness (*mimêma*) of the *logos*, a "reproduction" of the latter.

It might be presumptuous to identify, without further ado, *logos* and intelligible man – especially as Plotinus himself, in the passage we are considering, goes on to say that this *logos* is, in turn, related in a similar manner to the truest *logos* of Man – but without explaining exactly what he means. He may be referring to the Form of Man.[18] Be that as it may, for our present purpose it is sufficiently clear that in the notion of *logos*, itself already the transcendent vehicle of the intelligible, Plotinus crystallizes that view of man's real, original self – and does so perhaps more felicitously than in those passages which speak of a divine or "divinized" self.

Let us now turn to the last of the questions posed above,[19] that concerning the problem of the self's identity as an individual when it is described as being one with the Intelligible Whole. If, according to IV 7, 10,19, the soul is of identical substance (*homoousion*) with *nous*, how can the differentiation necessary to assure individual human existence be guaranteed to the self which has actualized this

identity of substance? VI 4, 14,1 ff., starting from the concept of an Intelligible Whole whose content is one and infinite,[2] raises this very question. In preparing the answer, Plotinus stresses that men, before birth, are "pure souls, *nous* inbound with the entire of reality, members of the Intellectual, not fenced off, not cut away, integral to that All", 19 ff. Note that he speaks of men being at once souls *and nous*: an indication that we have to do here not exclusively with man as *nous*, but rather with the man whose soul is *one with the Intelligible*. Thus one cannot conclude that when Plotinus says that *each one of us* was transcendental man, 25, he wishes to say that we exist as individual intelligences: for as souls we are already in the transcendent, and we can be so as individual souls. Plotinus probably does not want to say more than this.

In a significant passage of the same treatise, VI 5, 7,1 ff., Plotinus describes the return of the historical self (*hêmeis*, 1) to the Intelligible Whole. He says that "we" and "ours" are reducable to Being (*to on*): "we are those Beings," 4. Direct knowledge implies identification with the object of knowledge, "to know without image is to be." This identification is part of a community of Being, therefore "we all are they", i.e. *together*, while being one with all – so that we can say that "we and all things are one," 8. In the vision of the self thus unified with being, God, the self and the All coincide, 12.[21] It is, says Plotinus, in becoming aware of the infinity of self, its unlimited nature, and in ceasing to separate it from Universal Being, that one "advances" to the latter, i.e. realizes one's presence in it, οὐκ ἔχων ὅπῃ αὐτὸν στήσας ὁριεῖται, μέχρι τίνος αὐτός ἐστιν, ἀφεὶς περιγράφειν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος ἅπαντος αὐτόν, εἰς ἅπαν τὸ πᾶν ἥξει κτλ. We should compare this remarkable statement with the notions of chapter 12,17 ff., where Plotinus says that, in the case of unity with Being, one ceases to think of the self as having any particular extension, or being determined, οὐδ' εἶπας οὐδὲ σύ 'τοσοῦτός εἰμι'. One becomes "an All", ἀφεὶς δὲ ⟨τὸ⟩ τοσοῦτον γέγονας πᾶς. ("ein Ganzes", Harder) -- as one previously was. All that goes to make one an individual, 22, is

to be put aside: but precisely in this detachment from all accretive non-Being *is the self increased*: αὔξεις τοίνυν σεαυτὸν ἀφεὶς τὰ ἄλλα καὶ πάρεστί σοι τὸ πᾶν ἀφέντι, 24.[22]

There is a tension in these passages which highlights the problem under discussion. On the one hand, a direct identification of oneself and all Being, "we and all things are one": one ceases to respect the boundary line between the self and Being, to consider the self as determined. On the other hand, the notion, especially clear in chapter 12,24 ff., that this identification, precisely because it is indicative of our subsumption into Being and casting-aside of the unreal *accidentalia*, can be described as an augmentation of the self. The first notion has been a favourite argument of those who would see here an influence of oriental thought, in particular of the *Upanishads*, upon Plotinus.[23] The present writer is unqualified to discuss this question:[24] but be that as it may, it will be argued that an oriental "annihilation of the self" (if that, in fact, is what the *Upanishads* teach) is not what Plotinus means,[25] and that his arguments suffice to explain *philosophically* how he reconciles the two apparently conflicting tendencies. The whole question can be put in a nutshell: what is the meaning of the word *pas* in the phrase *gegonas pas* of VI 5, 12,19? Does it – as the "orientalizing" commentators insist – mean that the self becomes All, in the sense of no longer being different from It? Or can it mean a fulfilment, a growth to entirety, as chapter 12,24 ff. seems to indicate? The following pages will show that we agree with M. de Gandillac[26] when he translates chapter 12,17 ff. as follows: "Tu ne dis plus, je suis de telle ou telle manière, ayant laissé le 'de telle ou telle manière', tu es devenu 'tout entier'." Similarly, we shall support Gandillac's interpretation of the crucial phrase: "devenir tout, ce n'est aucunement se désintegrer au sein d'une totale indifférentation, c'est bien plutot 'devenir totalement ce qu'on est'. . . . En rencontrant seul à seul cet Un qui seul est pleinement ce qu'il est, au dêlà du plan des 'essences', le sujet unifié, celui qui atteint au maximum possible de sa propre 'simplification', se découvre dans sa vraie 'plenitude'."[27] But if we agree, with Gandillac,

that *gegonas pas* means the totality of what one's self is, we refuse to simplify the problem of reconciling this view with that of the self's identity with the All, as he tends to do in his rendering of chapter 12,24 ff. He translates "tu t'augmentes donc toi-même en abandonnant ce qui est autre que toi, et par cet abandon *tu es tout* entier présent à toi" (italics ours) – that is, he sees in *to pan* the totality of the self, the *pas* of line 19, and understands the phrase as indicating the self-presence of this "simplified" self. We cannot agree with this, either philologically (the *pan* is constantly referred to in the third person in the subsequent lines, and clearly means the Intelligible All), or – as will be shown – philosophically, and we adduce the translations of Harder ("Du wirst dich also grösser machen, wenn du das andere forttust, und durch dies Forttun *ist dir das Ganze da*") and MacKenna-Page ("By the lessening of the Alien in you, you increase. Cast it aside and *there is the All within you*") in our support. But how the self, to which the All is present, or which is present to the All, can remain itself individual, must now be shown.

It is in the identification of Being with knowledge, and hence in the examination of the nature of the act by which the self intelligizes Being, that a first step towards a satisfactory clarification of Plotinus' position must be made. At V 6 [24], 1,4 ff. Plotinus, dealing with self-intellection, says that in it "self-conversing, the subject is its own object". Thus, while being a unity, it becomes in the process dual. There can be no intellection without this *duality-in-unity*. Without unity, the initial phase, subject and object are external to each other, intellection will not be integral, and so not primal, uncharacteristic of *nous*; without the duality, there can be no reflexion, hence no intellection. Having thus derived his proof dialectically, Plotinus illustrates what he intends in the metaphor of two fused lights, the one standing for the intellective subject, the other for the object of intellection; of these lights, one can say *either* that the two are one, *or* that the one thing has become two. Plotinus succinctly makes his point in the chapter's final words, saying that the one thing "is dual by the fact of intellection, and

single by the fact that its intellectual object is itself", 23.

We should observe, firstly, the fact that intellection is described as proceeding from an initial unity which *dualizes* itself intellectually. One may say that all intellection implies self, precisely because it is only in the act of reflexion, which presupposes a subject, that intellection occurs. But (and this is the second observation) since this reflexion is upon the very subject of the dualized, intelligizing self, self-intellection does not lessen the unity of being – indeed, it depends for its integrity upon that unity. Hence the paradox[28] of unity-in-duality, or duality-in-unity, distinction and separability, individuality and "being All", is the only proper expression of self-intellection.

How does Plotinus apply this paradoxical answer to the problem of the retention of the ascended self's individuality? An interesting passage – IV 4 [28], 2 – is of help. Plotinus is dealing with the soul's nature "in the Intellectual", chapter 1,1, and he remarks that in the contemplative vision (*theôria*), chapter 2,4 ff., one is not so much aware of oneself as active, but, while self-possessed, one's activity (*energeia*) is towards the object of vision, and one becomes this latter and is formed by it, while remaining oneself only potentially,8.

The last remark leads to an obvious objection: "Is one then actively oneself only when one has intellection of nothing? " This cannot be, says Plotinus, for in *theôria* one is not "empty. . . of all" (in which case the objection would hold), but rather "all" (*panta*), 11, so that, in the one intuitive act, (a) "self-intuition . . .brings the intellection, not merely of the self, but also of the total therein included," and (b) "the intuition of the total of things brings that of the personal self as included among all." One recognizes here the influence of the idea of the identification of self and *panta*, noted at VI 5, 12,17 ff., and commented upon above.[29] In a sense, the self, as we saw there, is augmented by its becoming receptive of its fundamental oneness with the Whole or Intelligible All. If this is so, then Plotinus here can rightly speak of the "intuitive" self as "all" (*panta*), and conclude that intellection of *panta* is *included* in its self-intellection,

and vice versa. Furthermore, that this activity is none other than that evoked at V 6, 1 is clear from the description here of the soul's return to the Intelligible, as a return "from the constituents of the self to the self" (21 ff.), so that one can say "the contemplator is the total: duality has become unity."[30]

So far, the passage has related and reinforced previously expressed notions: in what follows, Plotinus turns to the central question of the survival of the soul as such in the Intellectual. It must of necessity enter into one-ness (*henôsis*) with *nous* by reason of its conversion, 26. But this *henôsis* does not imply, Plotinus continues, that soul loses its identity, 29: "the two are one, and two." One cannot fail to be struck by the use, once again, of the paradox of self-intellection, now clearly applied to explain how and why the human self, reverting to the Intelligible, *remains itself*, while at the same time being one with the totality of Being.

Thus it seems to be precisely in this paradox that Plotinus asserts the individuality of self in the All. Hence we may, with confidence, reaffirm the above, explanatory rendering of VI 5, 12,24 ff.,[31] against that of Gandillac, who, in stressing the motif of entire self-presence, fails to account for that of the simultaneous presence of the All; Plotinus would say that each implies the other. Our question, "Is self retained at intelligible level?" would appear to have the answer "Yes – and necessarily so."

The limit of the significance which one can attach to the aspect of "dehumanization" at V 8 [31], 7,31 ff. has already been commented upon.[32] But not until this stage of our investigation were we in a position to realize the sense of the phrases "he has ceased to be the All," and "restored to the Whole he is maker of the Whole," 32 ff. At the intelligible level, the previous passages have assured us, self is one with the All, the Whole, and can be called "maker of the Whole" because its intellection *is* the Intelligible Whole or Being, not merely in the sense of being identical with the latter, but because, moreover, it necessarily maintains it in existence.[33] And from the previous passages it may be inferred that one's

ceasing to be "man" in no way compromises one's individuality at this level: for the Whole and the self can be said to be a duality-in-unity, and vice versa.

In discussing the completeness of the Intelligible, whose *raison d'être* is its existence, Plotinus (VI 7 [38], 2,51 ff.) takes the example of man at intelligible level. It is best to quote the passage in its entirety: οἷον [καὶ] ἀνθρώπου πᾶς προεφάνη ὁ ἄνθρωπος συμφέρων ἑαυτὸν αὐτῷ, καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὁμοῦ ἔχων ἕτοιμός ἐστιν ὅλος. εἶτα, εἰ μὴ πᾶς ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ δεῖ τι αὐτῷ προσθεῖναι, γεννητός ἐστιν. ἔστι δ' ἀεί· ὥστε πᾶς ἐστιν. It is interesting to see how Plotinus derives the notion of man's being complete or entire (*pas*) from the perfection of the Idea in which nothing is lacking. Furthermore, the sense of *pas* as applied to man is unmistakably that of "complete, entire" – the equivalent of *holos*, 54. *Pas estin* – "he is complete" : we are surely justified in translating thus on the basis of *gegonas pas* at VI 5, 12,19, and so answering the question posed above[34] in terms agreeing with Gandillac's rendering of "devenir totalement ce qu'on est". However, it remains clearly possible that when Plotinus speaks of the self becoming *pas* the notion of one's becoming, in some sense, a *totality* of All Being is not absent from his mind. Thus, if we turn to the difficult, late passage III 2 [47], 14,15 ff., fresh, richer ambiguities are apparent.

Plotinus starts by asserting that in the transcendental each entity (*pan*) is everything (*panta*), whereas here below *ou panta hekaston* – the individual thing is not all, but is, we might add, a "self" and not the Total. Thus man insofar as he is a partial individual *ou pas*. How do we translate? "Not complete", certainly: but from the preceding discussion one must allow "not the Total" as well. The next sentence contains a similar ambiguity. When something not a part, says Plotinus – and he means thereby an Intelligible – associates itself with beings of part, the partial becomes in consequence *pan*. Again, what does *pan* mean? It certainly means "the partial becomes complete": but it can also be argued here that the partial can be meant to have, in consequence, a share in the totality of the Intelligible; that, in other words, its

completeness may in fact consist in its belonging to this total.

Continuing, Plotinus asserts of the individual that one cannot demand that he have attained to the summit of goodness, for he would then be no longer individual. We have without doubt here a reference to the "man" or self of historical process, the self of the *dianoêtikon*, or even the *eidôlon* of IV 3, 27,8. Its lack of perfection is due to a type of individuality that implies separation from true Being, and not to that individuality which is here in question, the identity of self maintainable even at intelligible level. That this is so becomes clear in the following.

What Plotinus says, in effect, is that the whole "bears no grudge" against any part that achieves goodness or beauty, for such achievement is an embellishment of the whole. Furthermore, the lesser increases by becoming like the greater, by coming to share in its rank: even in man's place, insofar as he becomes like the whole, III 2,14, 25, ἐκλάμπῃ τι ἐν αὐτῷ, οἷον καὶ κατὰ τὸν θεῖον οὐρανὸν τὰ ἄστρα.

In other words, the light of the individual's beauty, like that of the stars, is an embellishment of the whole – *as an individual*, be it noted. Continuing, Plotinus says – and the words are difficult — καὶ ἡ ἐντεῦθεν ἀντίληψις οἷον ἀγάλματος μεγάλου καὶ καλοῦ εἴτε ἐμψύχου εἴτε καὶ τέχνῃ Ἡφαίστου γενομένου κτλ. On the one hand we can interpret, with MacKenna, "all appears one great and lovely figure," that is, man takes his place as a part of this whole; on the other hand, it is possible to emphasize the notion of *antilêpsis* rather than that of the whole, and to say, as Theiler – following Harder – does, that it is connected with the *power of vision* inherent in the *eklampsis* of the self, and beholding the firmament as a divine body.[35] Both versions seem valid to us – in fact, they highlight the essential paradox of individuality and Being noted above:[36] man, perfected, is fully aware of the real, here symbolically the *universum* (Harder-Theiler); but man can also be said, "like. . . the stars", to *be seen to be* (*antilêpsis*!) a part, a light, in this real whole, and – we might add – as part of such an intelligible whole, to be identified with it in its entirety (MacKenna).

But how can the partial be the whole at the level of Being? We must now return to some passages in which this aspect of the nature of *nous* is considered.

In VI 2 [43], 20,1 ff., Plotinus distinguishes between "two phases of Intellect". On the one hand, there is that which has no contact with the partial, and so can never be a particular intellect (2); on the other, there are these particular intellects (12). To clarify their relation, Plotinus adduces the example of science (*epistêmê*),[37] as being prior to its constituents, and, in the case of specific sciences, likewise, the *potentiality* of all its parts; similarly, he continues, the particulars are actually themselves, potentially the sum of all, 5 f. The Aristotelian concepts of potency and act, here introduced, are then applied to intellect, 10 ff. Intellect as a whole is said to be prior to actualized individual intellects – it is their potentiality (13); it involves them in its wholeness. They, in turn, involve it in their partial nature. Each exists in itself, but is nonetheless included[38] in the other, 17 ff. – the term of mutual inclusion was already noted above[39] in IV 4, 2,13 f., and it was there suggested that Plotinus maintains that the particular necessarily implies the whole, and vice versa. The same is maintained here, with the new refinement that the two factors are now related rationally by means of the reciprocal potency-act concept, "All the particulars exist potentially in that self-existent universal, which actually is the totality, potentially each isolated member; on the other hand, each particular is actually what it is, potentially the totality," 20 ff.

One cannot fail to be impressed by the facility with which Plotinus here rationalizes the mechanism of Intellect as Whole and Particular. Just as he utilizes the implications of the concept of reflexion, of self-intellection to highlight, in a credible way, his fundamental intuition about the nature of *nous*,[40] so here he approaches the phenomenon from another angle, and a new aspect – of reciprocal potentiality and actuality – of its entire, yet internally differentiated nature is evoked. It is not without a sense of his own mastery of the process of his explanation that he can conclude, in

chapter 21,53 ff., that all (real) things exist forever, "involved by their very existence in eternity", and that "Individuals have their separate entities, but are one in the [total] unity." And, he adds, "the complex . . .of them all, thus combined, is *nous*."

Plotinus relates this exposé of the nature of *nous* to man, and in particular, to the human self, in I 1 [53], 8,1 ff. There he says that "this also (*nous*) we [i.e., the self] possess as the summit of our being." He is speaking of the psychic self, which as we saw, is sometimes retained by Plotinus in his account of the self at intelligible level, as at V 3, 8,47 ff.,[41] or IV 4, 2,29 ff.[42] – such passages express the complex relationship of a self identifiable as *dianoêtikon* with *nous* proper.[43] They may seem, at first sight, to stand in contradiction to the texts where the self appears to be nous pure and simple, but they are ultimately to be explained as attempts to grasp the notion of "intellectual life", of "oneness with the intelligible" from the viewpoint of here and now, of the historical process. In each case, Plotinus' starting-point is the relation of the self of process to the higher, the intelligible – he cannot therefore proceed to annihilate the psychic self in favour of some new, transformed nature: the psychic self obviously survives and co-exists with the higher. Thus his method and his language will be different from those of passages where his prime assumption is that the self is intelligible in nature. Since the previous chapter has shown us adequately that the self is observable and realizable, at various levels, according to the aspect of man considered, or according to the type of life lived, we should not confuse investigation of various *niveaux* with contradictory viewpoints in Plotinus' thought.

Of the self, then, Plotinus says in our passage (I 1,8) that it possesses "*nous* itself" (2) either as common to all or as a personal possession, or – he corrects himself – commonly (*koinon*, 4) *and* individually (*idion, ibid.*). Common to all, because it is "indivisible, one, everywhere and always its entire self", and individually, because each individual possesses it, entire (*holon*), in the intellectual phase of his soul.

This is clearly an application, carefully nuanced, of the teaching outlined above on the *total, entire character* of the intelligible universe, on the one hand, and its *particular aspects* on the other. Plotinus has related these aspects to the presence of *nous* in the self – starting from the subjective viewpoint of the latter. Thus the total Whole becomes the *nous* which we have in common with all men, and its particular aspect becomes that entire presence of the same *nous* in each one of us, precisely because we are nonetheless individuals in spite of our common possession of it, and because it cannot be divided, and so is entirely "in" each of us. In this way, Plotinus gives expression to the theme of total unity and individuality under yet a new aspect – to that theme which, as we have shown, is the centre of his account of man's nature at *nous* level.

Reflexion: Man's Self-knowledge at *Nous* Level

We must now turn to the question of self-knowledge *sensu stricto*, of that knowledge which is no mere awareness or realization of the nature of one's self, but actual *reflexion*,[44] which presupposes an essential *unity of subject and object*, the latter being no more than subsequently articulated polarities, derived in the analysis of the nature of that unity.

Texts bearing upon the nature of intelligible reflexion have already been mentioned.[45] They stress vital moments in the unfolding of Plotinus' thought, and they will be included in the short scheme now to be delineated. This scheme will indicate that when we speak of "unfolding" of thought in this context, we have in mind less a chronological than a systematic development. For once in the present work, the chronological order will give way to an argumentative order: this is justified by the facts (a) that all the elements of his thought on reflexion appear to be present in Plotinus' writings *ab initio*,[46] and (b) that where Plotinus himself thinks systematically, we shall do best to follow a similar method.

The scheme, which serves to initiate our inquiry, consists

of three theorems, each of which, in a sense, makes the foregoing more explicit. The first theorem is to be derived from the controversial passage V 1 [10], 7,4-6. Plotinus is dealing with the *quaestio vexata* of his system, how *nous* can derive from the a-noetic, hyperontic One. ἀλλ' οὐ νοῦς ἐκεῖνο· πῶς οὖν νοῦν γεννᾷ; ἢ ὅτι τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἑώρα· ἡ δὲ ὅρασις αὕτη νοῦς. The immediate philological problem is: which is the subject of ἑώρα, ἐκεῖνο, i.e. the absolute One, or *nous*? Henry-Schwyzer in their edition quote the rendering of Marsilio Ficino – *quia videlicet genitum conversione quadam ad genitorem inspicit* – that is, they support his rendering of *nous (genitum)* as subject. At first sight, this rendering would appear to make the text meaningless. For, one might argue, Plotinus would then be asking, "How does the One produce *nous*? and answering by saying "Because *nous* looks upon the One" – in other words, assuming an act of conversion on the part of an already produced *nous*, instead of accounting for the latter's production. What is more, the unexpectedly brusque change of subject, which would be involved in having *nous* as subject of ἑώρα, is difficult, as even Henry, a supporter of the change of subject,[47] admits. Such considerations, allied to the fact that a certain self-consciousness of the One appears to be suggested in line 12 of the same chapter, as well as at V 4, 2,17, led O. Becker to make *ekeino* the subject of the phrase, and to paraphrase it in the following terms: "Die Einheit bringt den Geist hervor, indem sie sich auf sich selbst hinwendet, und diese Art von Sehen ist der Geist."[48] The commentators have since remained divided on the matter. Bréhier and Harder have agreed with Becker; and in addition to Henry and Schwyzer, Cilento, Theiler and Krämer[49] – as well as Volkmann-Schluck[50] – have disagreed, and preferred the reading of Ficino. The latter would coincide with Plotinus' normal teaching on the One's absence of thought or consciousness of any kind[51] – for even if Becker had argued for an early ("in noch unentwickelter Terminologie") belief in the One's consciousness, which he tried to convey by the term "Selbstgefühl",[52] he did not, as Schwyzer points

out,[53] pay enough attention to Plotinus' use of the qualifying particle *οἷον* in those texts which he quotes. But the question remains: even if *nous* is the subject of the disputed phrase, how can one account for the sudden change of subject, and how can the phrase purport to answer the question preceding it?

The philological problem can best be solved by philological means, which, in turn, can be applied to the context of the whole. The question πῶς νοῦν γεννᾷ; can be seen to mean more than "How does the One produce nous?": by reason of the emphatic position of *noun* one can translate it as follows – "How is it that the One produces *nous*?" or "How is it that what is produced, τὸ γεννώμενον – Ficino's *genitum* – is *nous*?" seeing – as the context has just told us – that the One is not *nous*? This alters the meaning of the passage radically. We are not now dealing with the creative act of the One *per se*, but with the fact, subsequent to creation (which remains unexplained), that the created is *intelligence*. And Plotinus accounts for this by saying that it is intelligence because of its conversion towards the One. This latter explanation, as Theiler has pointed out,[54] has been given, in some more detail, at V 2, 1,8 ff., where it is said that the One creates an "other", and that then "this product has turned again to its begetter and been filled and has become its contemplator and so a *nous*." Furthermore, the notion of these two phases – that of the procession of the unlimited principle from the One, which in turn becomes determined in its conversion towards the One and – a third phase – thus becomes *nous*[55] – this notion is the basic teaching of Plotinus on the establishment of the hypostasis of *nous*.[56] We understand the passage in question to have this sense, and from it we would formulate the first theorem on reflexion as follows:

> the primal reflexion is that of *nous* upon the One, and is the act constitutive of *nous*.[57]

The second theorem derives directly from a passage already commented on above – V 6 [24], 1,1 ff.[58] Let us recall the key phrase: of the intellective principle, reflexive, it

is said that "while being a unity, it becomes dual." In other words,

> reflexion is of an initial unity which becomes dual in the act of reflexion.

From our analysis of this passage above, we saw that the "unity" spoken of here is co-existent with its reflexive duality, is neither prior to it nor removed by it. And precisely because it is the unity of a multiple (*ibid.*, chapter 5,1 ff.), it is to be distinguished from the One, which is "in every respect One": this multiple has reflexive self-awareness, which is denied to the One.

Thus, whereas the first theorem deals with the conversion of *nous* upon the One, the second deals with its conversion upon itself.

The third theorem on reflexion has already been formulated at the beginning of the present work.[59] At VI 7 [38], 41,19 ff., and again at V 3 [49], 13,17 ff., Plotinus stresses that

> reflexion is essential to maintaining the identity of the twofold intellect with itself.

This theorem derives from the second insofar as it presupposes the dualized unity of that theorem. For it is the unity of *nous*, "become dual", which must maintain itself by the unifying act of reflexion, in which it is present to itself, though double.

These theorems will serve as guiding-lines of our subsequent discussion, for reflexion is implied in the concept man at *nous* level. To a consideration of this reflexion, or, as Plotinus will call it, self-knowledge, we must now turn our attention.

A first indication of the accepted notion that man, as *nous*, has self-knowledge is given in the passage IV 7 [2], 10,32 ff.[60] Let us briefly recall the words of Plotinus, that purified man "sees himself thus entered into the pure, the Intellectual. For, what he sees is a *nous*. . . by its own eternity having intellection of the eternal . . .himself having become an intelligible universe. . . " The significance is clear: man, in self-vision, sees what he himself is, that is, *nous*.

Subject and object are identical: man is himself the intelligible universe.

The converse of the notion that man, as *nous*, knows himself – namely, that self-knowledge implies man's being real intelligible Being, is to be observed in Plotinus' interpretation of a Heraclitus fragment at V 9 [5], 5,31. The whole of chapter 5 can be described as the *locus classicus* in Plotinus for the ideas that (a) *nous is* what it intelligizes, and (b) *nous* is Being. In this context Plotinus quotes as Heraclitus' thought "I investigated myself,"[61] adding that this investigation of oneself was possible through the self's being "one of the real Beings". In his interpretation of Heraclitus, Plotinus adduces the Platonic tenet that only real Being is susceptible of rational investigation: thus, he says, Heraclitus' investigation of self was legitimate (29) insofar as it implied that man was one of the "Beings" by the fact of his being a *nous*, and so could really know himself.

This notion, that in self-intellection the object of our knowledge is an intelligible reality, which we are, is expressed at III 9 [13], 6. We see, says Plotinus, an intellective nature (1), the reality of a knowing nature (3). The means by which he seems to explain why this must be so are obscure and unsatisfactory:[62] what follows is but a tentative attempt to explain his argumentation. The words "before that intellection", etc. (3 ff.), are a recapitulation of chapter 1,15 ff. of the same "treatise", which distinguishes between νοῦν ... ἐν στάσει καὶ ἑνότητι καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ (= νόησις οἷον ἥσυχος, 6,4) and τὴν δὲ τοῦ νοῦ φύσιν τοῦ ὁρῶντος ἐκεῖνον τὸν νοῦν (=νοερὰν οὖσαν φύσιν νοοῦμεν, 6,3) τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνέργειάν τινα ἀπ' ἐκείνου, ἢ ὁρᾷ ἐκεῖνον.[63] Implicitly, then, the *active* intelligence in chapter 6 is equivalent to the latter *nous*, the manifestation in act of chapter 1. This is corroborated by the phrases ὅσα ἐνέργειαι, 6,6 f. — the subject of εἶδεν, *ibid.* — and αἱ ἐνέργειαι, 6,7. These *activities*, says Plotinus, are intelligences, insofar as they are self-knowing activities (7 f.); that is, he applies the theorem that reflexion is *nous*. Now precisely because *nous* is self-knowing, i.e. its own object, it can be called a νοητόν. Thus Plotinus can conclude τὸ νοητὸν

ἡμεῖς οἱ ὄντως, 8, and so prove his thesis. The argument is cumbersome, but has an inner coherence.[64]

Plotinus does not refrain from proclaiming his belief that within the self is to be found the reality of Being, of *nous*, and that this can best be – can, indeed, only be – grasped by reflexion. At VI 6 [34], 8,8 ff. he says that, abstracted from all perception, "One should contemplate *nous* by means of *nous* alone, and reflect that within ourselves is life and *nous*." Similarly, at III 5 [50], 7,53 ff., he says "in each particular human being we must admit the existence of intellective act and knowable object (*noêsin kai noêton*), so that it exists at once in us, and absolutely."[65]

The integral self-knowledge of *nous*, and hence, in consequence, of man as *nous*, is generally taken for granted by Plotinus. Only on a few occasions does he feel called upon to assert this explicitly, and to contrast reflexion with what are, for him, deficient modes of awareness. It will be instructive to examine these few passages, in order to clarify further our notion of reflexion.

At the beginning of his most comprehensive survey of the problem of self-intellection, Plotinus states (V 3 [49], 1,15 ff.) that it is absurd to deny this faculty to *nous*, which knows all other intellectual objects, but would, on this assumption, be ignorant of itself, "the being whose function it is to know just these things", lines 21 ff. But, he pursues, what can the nature of this self-intellection be? Could it be confined to knowledge of *the fact* that it knows (24), without knowing its *intelligizing self* (25)? In this case, its knowledge were simply *awareness* of its cognitive faculty, and the latter's activity, and would be no more than a type of partial knowledge, of one phase knowing other phases, which was not admitted as self-knowledge at the beginning of the chapter on the ground that such knowledge is "merely something that knows something else", 12.

Plotinus will rule out this awareness-as-self-knowledge theory explicitly in the fifth chapter of the treatise, to which some attention will be devoted: first of all, however, it should be remarked that at II 9 [33], 1,33 ff. Plotinus argues

from the structure of *nous* itself that it is impossible to separate the activity of intellection from awareness of the activity. The passage should be related to V 3, 1,15 f., even if it starts from a different problem, that of a plurality of intelligences (in fact, two), of which the prior in each case is the awareness of the later's intellectual activity. Formally, its distinctions are the same, that is, between a *nous* "that knows" and one "knowing that it knows", 34. Now Plotinus undertakes to show that *even conceptually* such a distinction of intellection and awareness of intellection is untenable. Having commented (44 ff.) on the absurdity of a knowing principle so limited that it is unaware that it knows, a limitation which, in a human context, would be considered equivalent to idiocy, Plotinus goes on to stress that the nature of "true *nous*" is to know itself, since it is, itself, the object of its intellection, and because such integral knowledge ("not from outside", 47) implies that this object be a knowing object. And, Plotinus concludes, if the object is knowing, the notion of double reflexion, of the fact that another *nous* is aware of the intellectual activity of the first, is rendered superfluous.

The crux of the argument is that this object of intellection is supposedly knowing – is, in fact, the self, the knowing subject. At II 9, 1 Plotinus does not, however, seek to *prove this:* he simply infers that it is so, and we must return to V 3 for a proof. In chapter 5 of that treatise, Plotinus first returns to the opening problem of the discussion – is self-knowledge simply a matter of one phase knowing another? Since this would involve a "partition" of *nous*, for which an agent cannot be found, and even were it possible, "in such self-knowledge by sundering it can be aware only of the object, not of the agent," we must conclude that ". . . it would not know its entire content, or itself as an integral whole," and this knowledge is not self-knowledge. Identity of seer and seen is *a priori* necessary for self-knowledge (21 ff.), which, being truth, is an interiorized, self-concentrated act (25 f.). But does such identity assure self-knowledge? It is this question which Plotinus must answer. He does so by

returning to a consideration of what the intellectual object must be, 32 ff. It is, he says, an *energeia*, it has life, and is "the primal reality": if it is such a primal *energeia*, then it is also *intellection in act*, it is "intellection possessing real Being", and such an intellection can be no more than, or less than "primal *nous*", itself also an *energeia*. Plotinus can now draw his conclusion in the form of a syllogism (V 3, 5,41):

εἰ οὖν ἐνέργεια καὶ ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ ἐνέργεια, ἓν
καὶ ταὐτὸν τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ ἂν εἴη (*sc.* ὁ νοῦς)
ἓν δὲ τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τὸ ὂν καὶ τὸ νοητόν (as proved
in lines 32–35).
ἓν ἅμα πάντα ἔσται, νοῦς, νόησις, τὸ νοητόν.

The key to the argument lies in the *linking concepts* of *energeia* and *noêsis*: *noêton* and *nous* are identified with these, so that in fact intellection is seen as one all-embracing activity in which the subjective and objective moments can, retrospectively, be isolated. In lines 44 ff. the implications of this identity of *noêsis*, *to noêton* and *autos* (*nous*) are fully worked out. It is in this way that Plotinus resolves the above-mentioned problem of the knowing nature of the object of knowledge: it is knowing insofar as it is *energeia* (which it *must* be, 32 ff.).

This theory of self-knowledge is given logical coherence of a more precise sort at VI 2 [43], 8,11 ff., where Plotinus, speaking of intellection, distinguishes its two moments. On the one hand, there is intellection, that is, *energeia* and *kinêsis*; on the other, there is the factor of *self*-intellection, in which the intellect, centered upon *itself*, is "Substance and Being". As Being it thinks (13), and it thinks its Being, as that reality upon which it depends. Thus, strictly speaking, the act of intellection is not Being, but Being is the source and goal of that act: yet again, because it is source and goal it is involved in intellection. Moreover, because it is *in act* (16), intellection "bridges the dualism" of subject and object, of intellect and being; as *energeia* it identifies itself with Being, and vice versa.

The line of argument here is significant. Starting from a logical distinction (of Act and Being), which would seem to

contradict V 3, 5,35, which identified the intellectual object as Being in Act, Plotinus first involves the vision of intellection in Being (15 f.) and then, by means of the concept of Act, clarifies their actual identity. In this way, while remaining faithful to the notion of moments or aspects of intellection which come to a concrete identity in the idea of the latter as an act, he can reach substantially the same conclusion as in V 3, 5.

It has been stressed that at V 3, 5,21 ff. the identity of seer and seen – and, hence, the interiorized nature of self-knowledge – is essential to the act of reflexion. This is similarly suggested in another passage, V 8 [31], 10,35 ff., "the clear-eyed hold the vision within themselves." This is described as a vision of the "divinity within", 43, but chapter 11,1 ff. makes it clear that this "god" (*nous*) is the self, and that self-identity (4) is the aim. Such perfect vision, which is described in terms of reflexion, as we isolated this latter in the theorems formulated above (in particular, the maintenance of identity in duality, of reflexion as the guarantee of this, 5 f. = Theorem 3) – such vision is contrasted with that type of awareness already shown to be deficient at V 3, 5 and II 9, 1. Thus Plotinus, in chapter 11,10, "at the beginning, he is aware of himself, so long as he is alientated"; V 3, 5,25, "truth cannot have something alien as its content, but must be that which it affirms"; II 9, 1,39, "it [i.e. the deficient mode of awareness] knows that it knows, whereby the subject of its knowledge is other than itself, and not itself." Then, making an important, if inevitable transition, Plotinus says that such vision is in fact a new *ontological determination* of the self, 20, "to see the divine as something external is to be outside of it; *to become it* is to be most truly in beauty." This is self-awareness (23) in unity: "we are most completely aware of ourselves when we are most completely identified with the object of our knowledge," 31. In other words, it is precisely in the act of reflexion that man exercises the intelligible aspect of his being, in accordance with the principle of spontaneous determination of being first outlined in III 4,[66] and thus one can say that man,

insofar as he is reflexive, is *nous*, for reflexion is the ontological hypostasis.[67] In this manner, the notion of reflexion is integrated into our concept of the self's freedom deriving from the previous chapter.

At V 6 [24], 5,1 ff. Plotinus repeats the notion, expressed in our third theorem on reflexion,[68] that what is multiple, always seeking its identity, desires "self-accord and self-awareness". Such a multiple is intellection, a secondary to the primal, unreflecting Good: intellection, indeed, is a movement towards the Good (8), and, in consequence of this, we can say that intellection is the working of the *agathoeides* (13) in *nous*, a recognition of its likeness with the Good, and a desire to possess in reflexion this likeness to the supreme as something good in itself. Thus self-intellection is not "deliberate", καὶ γὰρ αὖ ἐν τῇ νοήσει αὑτοῦ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς αὑτὸ νοεῖ· πρὸς γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν βλέπον αὑτὸ νοεῖ, 16.

What Plotinus is stressing here is the relative nature of self-knowledge in his philosophy, at the summit of which stands the vision of the Good, or One. In this sense, the present passage is a transition to our next chapter, which is to deal with the self at that level: it sets the limited nature of *nous* as an *agathoeides* in its context, and, hence, of reflexion as the awareness of a "manifestation of the Good", 15. The nature of Plotinian self-knowledge is nicely articulated by comparing this passage with one in the Aristotelian commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisias, a passage quoted by P. Merlan[69] as establishing a link between Plotinus and Alexander. In it,[70] Alexander, speaking of Aristotle's *De Anima* 429b9, says that in the knowledge of immaterial *noêta*, when act and object are one, man attains to self-knowledge, but only *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* (cf. text quoted above!) – for what man knows then is primarily only the immaterial *noêta*: that he himself is this *noêton* he perceives only incidentally. Merlan does not quote the Plotinus passage, which is nonetheless an interesting parallel, and, though its sense is different from Alexander's, may betray – particularly in the use of the notion of accident applied to

self-knowledge – an influence of Alexander upon Plotinus. If that were so, it would strengthen the thesis of Merlan's, and, in this particular case, make the "link" between the two writers clearer than Merlan suspects it to be. For while in Plotinus self-knowledge is relative to unifying vision of the Good, in Alexander the self-knowledge implied in knowledge of immaterial intelligibles is (as Merlan implies – correctly, we think) relative to the true self-knowledge of the *nous poêtikos*, no longer, as Merlan says, *per accidens*. The latter self-knowledge is, of course, equivalent to the self-knowledge found relative by Plotinus, whereas the former would be akin to the awareness of V 3, 5 and II 9, 1; so that – despite the parallel – this difference of *niveaux* illustrates well the distinction between the Platonist, whose concepts transcend the intellectual, and the Aristotelian, whose highest is reached in *noêsis noêseôs*.

It is interesting to compare V 6, 5 with another unique passage, I 4 [46], 4,6 ff. Man, says Plotinus, has perfect life when he possesses "reason and true *nous*". What then, he asks (18), is the Good for such a man? The answer "He himself by what he has and is" may surprise, but Plotinus quickly stresses that this "Good" is not the hypostasis Good[71]: he makes the distinction clear by saying that "the transcendant Good is only the cause of the Good in him [i.e. man]; that It is Good, is to be distinguished from the fact, that It manifests Itself in him," 19 f. This special mode of presence of the Good might be compared with its "presence" as *agathoeides* at V 6, 5,13 f. Again, on the grounds of that passage, and because we are in fact dealing with the possession of a "perfect life", which is "reason and true *nous*", we may infer that the "Good for man", described as "himself", to which he is related in the mode of reflexion, is none other than *intelligible*: that is, it is *nous*.

Both V 6, 5 and I 4, 4 relate self-knowledge to the overriding claims of vision of the Good: they stress the limited, derived nature of the former, and, insofar as they describe it as the activity of an *agathoeides*, relate it directly to that concept of *nous* as a Being which proceeds from the

Supreme (*to hen* = *to agathon*), and is, through conversion, determined by It – the concept typified in the first theorem on reflexion above.[72]

4. The Self and the One

When we turn to consider the survival and nature of the self in the moment of *unio mystica*, there is a serious formal difficulty which prejudices all our efforts to remain philosophically coherent. Since the mystical vision, by definition, breaks the bounds of intelligible categories, it cannot, strictly speaking, be analysed in rational terms. As Karl Jaspers says, "In der Bewusstlosigkeit oder 'Ueberbewusstheit' des Unmittelbaren der unio sind Gegenstände und Ich verschwunden. Jede Bewusstheit von Etwas und von mir selbst ist aufgelöst. Die Subjekt-Objekt Spaltung ist nicht mehr. Es handelt sich, von uns her gesehen, um einen Ausnahmezustand, aus dem der ihn Erfahrende zurückkehrt und etwas mitzubringen scheint, als ob es ein Wissen sei."[1] Because of the disappearance of the subject-object distinction, even on the level of awareness, the language used, after the event, to speak of the experience will be *approximate*, evocative rather than analytical. Yet the philosophical mystic – and, hence, Plotinus *par excellence* – aware that the experience of union with the Absolute is the culmination of his thought, rather than its contradiction, attempts to relate this description, no matter how tentatively, to the remainder of this thought. That is to say, he tends to analyse rather than merely to evoke. Or, in Jasper's words, he assumes the *experience* to be *knowledge* ("als ob es ein Wissen sei"). To be more explicit, he raises the question of the identity of subject and object in the moment of union. Nor is this totally unjustifiable – for he observes, rightly, that he survives, as self, this moment, that his identity is resumed after it ("der ihn Erfahrende zurückkehrt"). Hence he may properly ask: does the self *really* disappear in the moment of *unio*? And whether it does or not, what faculty

experiences and "sees" – for we are somehow aware that "we" have experienced and "seen" afterwards? These questions lie behind several meditations of Plotinus, to which we must now turn. That Plotinus should have asked them is not surprising – not merely for the reasons here evoked, but also since the previous chapters have shown him to have been preoccupied by the problem of the self's nature, of the identity of the human subject at various levels of experience.

Plotinus' favourite evocation of mystical union is through metaphors of *light*. Thus at 1 6 [1], 9 the self (*autos*, 18) *is* the "only veritable light", and "when you perceive that you have grown to this, you are now become very vision,"22.[2] A transformation of the "everyday" self is in question: at chapter 9,7 ff. it is said that man can work upon this transformation. Plotinus, as Harder has pointed out,[3] has subtly rewritten the image of the *Phaedrus* (252d), so that the "statue" (*agalma*) becomes the self:[4] *erôs* has become, in Harder's expression, *Autoerotik*. Thus at chapter 5 Plotinus can speak to the "lovers" (9) who "when you see that you yourselves are beautiful within. . . long to be one with your self," 5 ff. Similarly, at chapter 9,15 ff., ". . . you have become this perfect work [i.e. the *agalma*], and have had vision of it, and you are self-gathered in the purity of your being. . ." In the simpler language of the *Phaedrus* it was a question of communion with the beloved. For Plotinus – we can conclude – it is in a heightening of *self-possession*, of *self-concentration*, carried to its extreme, that vision occurs; if the self experiences unification (17), it is *entirely as itself*, 18.

Similar language is used in the celebrated passage IV 8 6, 1,1 ff., which speaks of an awakening "into myself; becoming . .self-encentered. . .acquiring identity with the divine(5); stationing within it. . .poised above whatever else is intellectual". The self is "stationing" in identity with the divine: it is "in the One" *as itself*, and, indeed, in possession of itself most fully, that this "stationing" occurs. Now it is axiomatic for Plotinus that entry into selfhood is the way to attainment of unity with the Highest (VI 9, 2,35). In the present

context, however, the self is said to be "in" the divine, 6: that is to say, not as *nous*, but as *hypernoetic*. Does Plotinus intend us to understand that the self, in mystical union, transcends the category even of *nous*?[5]

Another treatise gives an explicit answer to this question. In VI 9 [9], 9,55 Plotinus first stresses that it is with the entirety of the self that one has mystical vision. Indeed, this vision is of the Absolute *and* oneself together (57). But one can scarcely speak of vision,[6] for, as Harder says, ". . . es sich nicht eigentlich um Sehen, sondern um Einswerden handelt".[7] And since it is a question of becoming Unity, of a complete absence of differentiation between subject and object, one cannot speak (chapter 11,8 ff.) of movement, desire, or even reason on the part of the human self. Indeed, adds Plotinus, one cannot even conceive of the self's existence at this state: "it is not quite itself" – then, correctively, "if one, indeed, may say this". There is even mention (line 23) of an *ekstasis*, a "going forth from the self" (MacKenna). But this would appear to contradict the words of chapter 9,55, and, hence, of the above passages, and – far from answering the question of whether *nous* is transcended in *unio* – makes that question superfluous. Can Plotinus really mean that the self is annihilated?

Plotinus' attitude may be clarified later in the same chapter 11, 35 ff., where he says that the psychic nature – and here he means the subject of *unio* – can never "touch utter nothingness": to non-being perhaps, as in the case of evil, but not to absolute non-being. Now this is equivalent to saying that soul – or the self – *can never be annihilated*, and Plotinus corroborates this in his next words. The ascending soul, he says, does not proceed "to something alien" (39), but *to itself*, and, in being in no other than itself it is in the Absolute. Now this being in the Absolute and not in Being can only mean that the self in *unio* is "beyond Being", is *hyperontic*: "There is thus a converse in virtue of which the essential man outgrows Being, becomes transcendent of Being." If the self is hyperontic, then it transcends *nous* which *is* Being, and so, again, it is *hypernoetic*.

In these phrases Plotinus assures at once the reality of the self in *unio*, and its reality above *nous*. The self, we may say, is totally *one with the One*, but as a subject, as *itself*. Plotinus, in the same chapter, speaks of the "solitary" (51) which is "likeness of the Supreme", 43. We recognize in this new, indisputable reality of the self a further type of that self-determination of the self's reality at different levels, which has so often been cited as the fundamental Plotinian notion of the self. Of this latest "self" we can, indeed, say that it is an "absolute" self: the self of chapter 11,11, on the other hand, is the self of history – this is shown to be the case at chapter 10,15, where Plotinus, speaking of *unio*, says that self "is changed, no longer himself nor self-belonging; he is merged with the Supreme. . . one with it". All Plotinus means, then, by the "annihilation" of self is the transformation of the "everyday" self already noted above.[8]

Nonetheless, the nature of *unio* poses problems for Plotinus as philosopher. These are discussed at V 5 [32], 10,1 ff. On the one hand, *unio* implies direct, unmediated vision; on the other, the human self, despite its hyperontic mode, cannot be expected to experience the total power of the Absolute. Thus Plotinus: "Who could grasp Its [the Absolute's] power in all its concentrated fullness? For if one could, how could one be differentiated from It?" The distinction between the One and the self is to be maintained. As was remarked at the beginning of this chapter,[9] this distinction is made after the event and is *logical* – for the nature of mystical experience belies it. But, as we said there, the distinction is nonetheless justified, for the self is *a reality*, as was since shown, in the moment of *unio*, and not merely afterwards – despite the fact that one is *not aware* of the distinction at that moment.[10]

But, Plotinus asks, if the distinction is maintained, and if the self as self cannot experience the whole power of the One, must we then assume that vision is to be partial? This, he says, cannot be: for then the self will be merely *nous noôn* (9)[11] and will lose vision. You must, says Plotinus, "throw forward all your being" in a moment that will not be able to

articulate the totality of the One, but will simply *see* It as a whole (10).

Thus Plotinus, having gone so far in the analysis of vision as to stress its unitary nature and the transformation it wreaks upon the self, takes refuge in the last resort in the *incommunicability* of the experience evoked. As he says elsewhere, δύσφραστον τὸ θέαμα (VI 9, 10, 19). It remains an *Einswerden* which is best imaged in the phenomenon of vision. But if the One is ever-present to us, as "Good" (V 5, 12,11 ff.) – even when we are unaware of It – Plotinus nonetheless asserts that, contrary to the symptoms of the experience, this immanence of the One is not to be falsely understood (chapter 13, beginning); "moving above all that order [of the later and lower], it is cause and source of all these, and is none of them," *ibid.*, line 19. It is the same insistence of chapter 10; self and One are to be kept apart in our thought, even in the moment of *unio*.

At IV 8, 1,6 the self which experiences *unio* was described as *hypernoetic*;[12] at VI 9, 11 it was called hyperontic.[13] The question of what faculty has this experience continued to perplex Plotinus in later treatises. Already in VI 9 an ambiguity is apparent. For if self is hyperontic, it is nonetheless maintained at chapter 3,26 that "with pure *nous*, and with the summit of *nous* we are to see the all-pure." What Plotinus is thinking of here is without doubt the "flower of *nous*"[14] of the Chaldæan oracles:[15] for our present purpose, it is important that, whether it be the "summit of *nous*" or the "flower of *nous*", the subject or self is noetic, intelligible.

The ambiguity is deepened in the later III 8 [30], 9,21 ff. ". . . this Entity [i.e. the Good] transcends all of the intellectual nature; by what direct intuition (*epibolê*), then, can it be brought within our grasp?" The answer, Plotinus says, must be – "by virtue of what in ourselves is like it", and, he proceeds, ". . .in us also, there is something of that Being." In other words, "we", the self, are, in some sense, akin to the One which transcends Intellect. Thus our *nous* must retreat and tend towards the ascendant of its two

modes, so that, in having vision, *it is no longer really nous*, 29 ff. That is, Plotinus here once again assumes a total transcendence of Intellect in the *unio mystica*, although, be it noted, he tends to qualify this assertion.[16]

This assertion is supported by those of a treatise in the same *Schrift*,[17] V 5 [32], 6,19. Plotinus says there that "one wishing to contemplate what transcends the Intellectual succeeds by putting away all that is of the intellect," that is, he is to see It "as It is" and not merely to know "that It is" – although even the former is, in the case of the indefinable, hyperontic One strictly speaking impossible.[18] Similarly, at chapter 8,22, "because it is *nous*, it must see by that in it which is not *nous*." From the preceding, we know that it is the mystical vision that is in question here. Nothing, it would seem, could be less ambiguous: there *is* a *hypernoetic* faculty.

But, just when our difficulty would seem clarified, there comes another passage where Plotinus again hesitates to posit such a faculty. At II 9 [33], 9,45 ff., Plotinus urges man to temper his own importance, to allow other things their "place in the presence of the Godhead", and only to achieve identity with "God in the measure possible to the human soul" – that is, "to the point of likeness to which *nous* leads us", 51. For, warns Plotinus, "to exalt ourselves above *nous* is to fall from it." Plotinus' careful avoidance of positing hypernoetic activity here may be due partly to the specific opponents, the Gnostics, to whom the treatise is directed, and who, as lines 52 ff. state, readily posit wildly inconceivable human powers. But the phrase "to exalt ourselves above *nous* . . ." has the air of an axiom about it: and it can be corroborated, implicitly, by the earlier VI 9, 3,26. Furthermore, it states anew the as yet unresolved problem: how can a faculty – a *human* faculty – subsist when it is said to transcend the highest recognizable feature of man, his *nous*? And it stresses how perplexed Plotinus was over the problem, for II 9 is the fourth and last of that connected set of treatises in the first (III 8) and third (V 5) of which the hypernoetic nature of self was elaborated.[19]

Of itself, the axiom of II 9, 9,51 f. cannot stand, for

despite the difficulties it introduces, there can be no doubt that man, in experiencing mystical vision, does transcend intellectual categories. Thus at VI 7 [38], 35,1 ff. Plotinus can assert that in the unifying vision of the One, the soul's intellectual act is dismissed, while nonetheless insisting that it was only insofar as soul became *nous* (4) that it had vision, when it was "as it were, intellectualized, and taking its stand in the realm of *nous*". In the same chapter Plotinus tries to resolve the antinomy. He first of all distinguishes a twofold power of *nous*, 19 ff.[20] The one contemplates its own contents, 20, and is a "vision of the *nous emphrôn*", 24. The other power advances to grasp intuitively (*epibolê*) its transcendent, and is Intellect loving, *nous erôn*. What Plotinus is attempting to do here is clear. Ultimately, he does not want to situate the self which experiences *unio* outside of *nous*, of the ontic realm, because of the contradictions involved. In this case, however, he must isolate an instance of *nous* which transcends its characteristic activity of reflexion, and attribute to this the vision of the One. Such an instance may be furnished by the concept of a *nous erôn*. Of this *nous* he says presently that "it has an act unattended by knowing, a vision of It [the One] by another approach", 29 f.

But the notion of a non-intellectual Intellect is quickly found unsatisfactory. At first Plotinus returns to the notion of the beginning of the chapter, that the *nous* in soul is annihilated in vision: "the soul. . . attains to that vision by – so to speak – confounding and annulling the *nous* within it", 33, but he must correct himself – "or rather the *nous* in it [soul] sees first"; then the vision enters soul, and "the two [i.e. soul and *nous*] become one."[21] In a sense, the term "soul" is used here in a compensatory sense – for nous cannot describe the whole vision, which is, in the ultimate reckoning, more than intellectual. Thus soul is identified with *self* as the subject of vision. But this identification is, in turn, found to be inadequate. In lines 42 ff. Plotinus comments that the "soul" in the moment of mystical vision knows no movement, for the Absolute knows none; neither does the Absolute live, and so, unknowing and not living, soul "is now

not even soul". But neither is it *nous* at this moment, for the Absolute does not intelligize, and in a vision where "object and act of vision have become identical" (14) "likeness must be perfect" (45). So one may conclude that vision is not perceived intellectually, *noei de oud' ekeino*, *ibid.*

Thus Plotinus' attempt to posit a *nous erôn* fails in the very chapter in which he makes it. The *aporia* of the previous chapter 34 is thus not solved. There (lines 3 ff.), it was also asserted that the soul which is enamoured of the One lays all shape aside, even the intellectual form in it: it is denuded of everything, bad or good, that "alone it may receive the Alone." This is the self most totally itself, the "solitary" of VI 9, 11,51.[22] And, as in the texts treated above, this self is, in *unio*, one with the One: "there is nothing between: here is no longer a duality but a two in one," 13. All distinction fades, "the soul. . . will give herself no foreign name, not man, not living being, not being, not all," 17. It is absorbed in the Absolute: "This she looks upon and not upon herself; and who she is that looks she has not leisure to know," 20. The remainder of the chapter describes the *apokatastasis* of the soul – the *individual* soul – and yet what is transformed is neither *psychê* nor is it *nous*. As was noted in the case of chapter 35 above, the term *psychê* appears to be chosen rather than *nous* for the faculty in question, if only because its connotations are wide, compensating for the clearly delimited function of *nous*. Yet ultimately soul, too, is discarded, and the problem remains unsolved.

Now our investigation has shown us that the faculty, or subject, of vision is the *self* at its deepest.[23] Plotinus' failure to repeat this in the above passages may be due to his having no fixed word – hence no *concept*, strictly speaking – for "self": as P. Henry has pointed out,[24] there is no word for "person", or self, in Greek, and so Plotinus uses *autos* to express the concept. He also uses *hêmeis*, or the reflexive *hauton*, as we have seen. But if the word, and the explicit, canonized concept are missing here, adequate testimony has already been given of Plotinus' clear awareness of the importance of a concept of self – whether in the historical

process or in reflexion – to account for the identity of a human subject at the several levels of existence possible to man. Plotinus cannot have been unaware of the possibility of applying this concept to the problem of the faculty which experiences *unio mystica*. That he did not establish the *category of self* explicitly may be due to the conservative tradition of the philosophy of his day – as E.R. Dodds has stressed, "Originality as such was not in demand in the third century,"[25] and yet, while *formally* being no more than an interpretation of Plato, Plotinus' thought is substantially modern, "an attempt to solve the spiritual problems of the day".[26] The present case illustrates this perfectly: although he is working successfully with the "new" concept of the self, Plotinus, out of philosophical *pietas*,[27] will insist on analysing the subject of *unio* in terms of the traditional concepts of *psychê* and *nous*. Hence his strange persistence in trying to say what is new in the language that Plato spoke.

There is another way of knowing about the nature of the self in *unio*, and that is by means of a number of remarkable statements Plotinus makes about the One, with which the human self is one in that state. Thus at V 1 [10], 11,10 Plotinus, speaking of the One "in us", says that it reveals itself in those subsequents capable of receiving it "as another self, so to speak" ("gewissermassen ein zweiter Er", Harder). That would mean that the One, a self (*autos*), is manifest, as itself, in several subsequents.[28] Or could we here understand the phrase to mean that the One is intimately present to each capable subsequent as an *alter ego*, and might the phrase be an echo of Aristotle's definition of a friend, "the friend is another self"?[29] For it is, after all, characteristic of the self as *erôn*[30] to be inseparable from the One which it loves, to no longer distinguish itself from It.

Be that as it may, the question remains, is the One to be described as a "self"? Now there is a striking passage which would seem to state this explicitly. At the end of his long treatise "On Free Will and the Will of the One," VI 8 [39], 21,32, Plotinus says that the One is "solely and essentially Itself, while all else is itself and something else". Here the

One appears to be conceived of as the principle of pure identity, the totally subjective and self-contained in a hierarchy where identity is gradually diminished at each stage of descent. We might compare another statement from the same treatise. At VI 8, 14,42 the One is said to be "cause of Himself; for Himself and of Himself He is what He is, the first self, transcendently the Self" (MacKenna). This is explicit: the One is an absolute Subject or Self. The fact was already noted by Bréhier: "l'Un de Plotin n'est ni une chose, ni un objet; il est le sujet pur, absolu, solitaire."[31] If Plotinus can say of the One that it is supremely Self, then we may be permitted to make certain conclusions concerning selfhood from his statement. First of all, selfhood, for Plotinus, would be in strict contrast to individuality. The latter is disparate, ultimately a phenomenon of *nous*, and, in particular, of the historical process, an "apostasy from the Whole", whereas the former, on the contrary, is an in-gathering, an elimination of all that is disparate. Thus the self may be said to increase in stature as it ascends: this was already the case at the level of *nous*, as was commented upon above.[32] Man, becoming *pas*, is more his real self than hitherto. Finally, if this be so, then the self, in the moment of *unio mystica*, one with the One, must, as "likeness of the Supreme" (VI 9, 11,43), by virtue of the One's transcendent, absolute nature, be, in its own way, transcendent and absolute. This would be the self which we, at our highest, are. Already in the moment of union with Being the self is described as being aware of its *limitless* nature, non-individual, VI 5, 7,15. There would seem to be adequate support here for asserting that the problem treated above, of what faculty is engaged in the act of unitive similarity with the One, can be solved by showing that the One is *par excellence* the Self, and that, hence, the human subject of *unio* is none other than the self. As Bréhier says, "La réalité de l'Un correspond à l'affirmation de l'autonomie radicale de la vie spirituelle lorsque cette vie est saisie en elle-même. . . dans sa plénitude concrète."[33] And, speaking of the hypostases as subjects, "il n'existe, dans la réalité véritable, rien de tel que des choses; il n'existe que des

sujets qui contemplent, et chez qui la contemplation, comme dans les monades de Leibniz, est à un degré de concentration et de pureté plus ou moins grand."[34]

But if the One is the Self supreme, can It be said to be self-aware, like the reflexive human self? In spite of passages which might suggest this,[35] Plotinus generally denies it explicitly.[36] We need only consider some similar passages immediately relevant to the relation of the One to the human self. Thus, at VI 7, 38.10 ff., Plotinus asks, who will deny that the One has self-awareness, self-knowledge, that it will "be able to say 'I possess Being'"? (This assertion is taken to be the fundamental human one.) But, he answers, it does not exist. Will it not say "I am good"? But that would be, once again, to predicate Being of It. If the Good thinks, it thinks, not Itself, but the Good – it would have an intellection of the Good, and would not be the Good, but a *noêsis*, lines 18-20. Thus, Plotinus concludes, the Good is prior to *noêsis* – that is, to reflexion – it is self-sufficient, and does not need *noêsis* of itself in order to be Good. With self-knowledge, it would be an object, determined (*ti*, 39.1[37]). In fact, it has no more than a simple *epibolê* (39.2 f.) relative to itself – an intuition that does not presuppose the duality of subject and object.

We should like to comment on two aspects of this passage. Firstly, on the notion that self-awareness is the feature of a multiple. In the third theorem on reflexion[38] it was pointed out that this is necessary to the maintenance of the self-identity of intellect. Now intellect is (theorem two) a unity-become-dual, a two-in-one. As V 3 [49], 13.17 says, self-intellection begins when a principle, though "self-sufficient. . . yet needs itself". It is essentially the activity of a multiple: the very fact of saying "I am a being" is indication of a manifold. (This had been asserted in an early part of the treatise, chapter 10.34 ff., where it is stated that the expression "I am this particular thing" implies multiplicity, even if the "particular thing" is included in the self – for even then the expression would be equivalent to "I am what I am," or "I am I," that is, tautological.) If then, says

Plotinus, the multiple – for example, the human self – turns towards itself as a simple being, it misses both itself and Being. Now Plotinus would seem here to deny an ultimate simplicity of the self: true, it is of union with *Being* that he momentarily speaks. But the warning here issued is akin to that of II 9, 9,51, "to exalt ourselves above *nous* is to fall from it."[39] The question inevitably arises: if the One as a Self was said[40] to be an absolute of which the human self is a "likeness", and is nonetheless non-reflexive,[41] how can we describe the essentially reflexive self, the manifold, from descriptions of It?

It may be rash to try to answer this question. In the first place, a reminder. At the beginning of this chapter it was pointed out that the analysis of *unio* after the event tended to produce a false knowledge of what is, ultimately, not analysable. Nonetheless, it was later asserted[42] that the self – of which one need not be aware in the moment of *unio* – is a reality, and does not "vanish" in that moment (otherwise there would be no experience): thus, it can, in a sense, be investigated as to its nature in that moment. So we may be justified in attempting to describe it from a description of One as Self – bearing in mind the exceptional, momentary transformation of the self which is in question.

Such an attempt is the second comment we should like to make on VI 7, 38,10-39,1 ff.[43] It concerns the "simple intuitive approach (*epibolê*) to Itself" (39,1) attributed to the One. It can only be an activity of the One, for "What can that which grasps Itself be, other than Itself?" Now we recall that at III 8, 9,20 ff. it was asked, by what "direct intuition (*epibolê*) we can know the One, and the answer given was, by means of that which is like It in ourselves, by abandoning *nous*, the manifold which says "I am". Now the term *epibolê* here used[44] has been admirably analysed by Rist,[45] who draws our attention to the technical use of the term in Epicureanism.[46] Rist rightly sees *epibolê* "as a comprehensive (*athroas*, Diog. Laert. 10,35) view of the data provided by the senses or the mind. . . not a grasping of new external data but a casting back of the mind on itself and on

whatever impressions it has."[47] Rist observes that, while the Plotinian process is different from Epicurean "sensationalism", it nonetheless resembles this in its comprehensive, self-reflexive nature. We should like to add that, in Plotinus, it is also essentially an intuitive act, hardly analysable in rational terms. And bringing our two passages, III 8, 9 and VI 7, 38, together, we should like to suggest the following interpretation: on the basis of the above[48] justified description of the self from that of the One as Self, can we not conclude that the relation of the human subject ("no longer really *nous*") to itself ("by virtue of that in ourselves which is like it") in *unio* is analogous to the "intuitive approach to Itself" of the One asserted at VI 7, 39,1 f.? The term *epibolê* links the two passages: both seem to corroborate the assertions that, on the one hand, the One is a Self, and, on the other, that, of the faculty experiencing *unio*, we can say no more than that it is – "the self".

Notes to Introduction

1. On the originality of the concept cf. J. Stenzel, "Metaphysik des Altertums", *Handbuch der Philosophie,* 1. Abt. (Munich 1934), p. 56.

2. E. Bréhier, *La Philosophie de Plotin,* p. 68.

3. J. Trouillard, *La Purification Plotinienne,* pp. 26f.

4. R. Harder, *Plotin* (Auswahl), p. 19 (=*Kleine Schriften,* p. 269).

5. E.R. Dodds, *Sources,* pp. 385 f.; cf. also H.-R. Schwyzer's remarks, *ibid.,* p. 390. Dodds repeats his comments in "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus", *Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960), 6.

6. W. Himmerich, *Eudaimonia,* pp. 92-100.

7. W. Himmerich, "Platonische Tradition in didaktischer Reflexion: Plotin-Comenius-Scheler", *Parusia, Festgabe für Johannes Hirschberger,* p. 495.

8. Other scholars have recognized the importance of the concept, e.g. P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la Simplicité du Regard* (Paris 1963), pp. 23-39; E. von Ivánka, *Plato Christianus. Uebernahme und Umgestaltung des Platonismus durch die Väter* (Einsiedeln 1964), pp. 84 f.; E.W. Warren, "Consciousness in Plotinus", *Phronesis* 9 (1964), 83-97, esp. 92-97; H.J. Blumenthal, "Did Plotinus Believe in Ideas of Individuals?", *Phronesis* 11 (1966), 61-80, esp. 61; A.H. Armstrong, *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy,* p. 225; J.M. Rist, "Integration and the Undescended Soul in Plotinus", *American Journal of Philology* 88 (1967), 410-422; P.S. Mamo, "Forms of Individuals in the Enneads", *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 77-96, esp. 77-79. But no attempt has been made to study the concept exhaustively.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Cf. e.g. V 3, 5.41.

2. ὁ δὲ μαθων ἑαυτὸν εἰδήσει καὶ ὁπόθεν, VI 9, 7,33; cf. V 3, 7,1ff.

3. εἰς ἑαυτὸν γὰρ ἐπιστρέφων εἰς ἀρχὴν ἐπιστρέφει, VI 9, 2,35.

4. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini,* 24,5ff.

5. *Ibid.,* 24,15.

6. Note *ad loc.* in *Plotinus Schriften* Vc, p. 122.

7. R.A. Markus in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy,* p. 344: he quotes Augustine's reference, *De*

Civitate Dei, XIX 1,2, to Varro's distinction of 288 philosophies on the basis of their different answers to the question "How can one attain happiness?"

8. Cf. also IV 7, 1,21.

9. Cf. Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* (ed. C.F. Matthaei, Halle, 1802), p. 37.

10. Cf. line 2 of the same chapter.

11. Cf. VI 4, 14,29; IV 3, 25,38; IV 4, 18,21, etc.

12. Here the "composite" in question is that of body used by soul: The Platonic definition, according to Plotinus! It will presently be suggested (p.35) that Plotinus has refined the notion of definition, thanks to Aristotle's and his own investigations. Nonetheless, we must bear in mind that in the present passage man in the realm of sense is under discussion; the definition of the *Alcibiades* remains in a sense valid for man in the intelligible realm, cf. VI 7, 5,23ff.

13. Cf. IV 4, 18,20; 20,15.

14. 133c, καί τις εἰς τοῦτο βλέπων καὶ πᾶν τὸ θεῖον γνούς, θεόν τε καὶ φρόνησιν, οὕτω καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἂν γνοίη μάλιστα.

15. p. 9.

16. *Plotins Schriften,* Vb, pp. 368f.

17. III, 556–583 Wachsmuth-Hense.

18. No. 7, 557,12—Ἡράκλειτος νέος ὢν πάντων γέγονε σοφώτερος, ὅτι ᾔδει ἑαυτὸν μηδὲν εἰδότα. Cf. gnomol. Vat. 310.

19. *Apology,* 21a ff.

20. ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν, Plutarch *adv. Colot.* 20, 1118c (= DK 101).

21. Cf. another Heraclitus fragment, DK 116.

22. G.S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1957), p. 213.

23. D.L. IX, 5 ἤκουσέ τε οὐδενός, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἔφη διζήσασθαι καὶ μαθεῖν πάντα παρ' ἑαυτοῦ.

24. 28, ἐπιτυγχάνοντες ὧν πράττουσιν, εὔδοξοί τε καὶ τίμιοι γίγνονται.

25. H. Maier, *Sokrates*, (Tübingen 1913), p. 82.

26. Cf. Xenophon *Mem.* IV, ii, 24 σχολῇ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλο τι ᾔδειν, εἴ γε μηδ' ἐμαυτὸν ἐγίγνωσκον with *Phaedr.* 229e5 οὐ δύναμαί πω κατὰ τὸ

Δελφικὸν γράμμα γνῶναι ἐμαυτόν· γελοῖον δή μοι φαίνεται τοῦτο ἔτι ἀγνοοῦντα τὰ ἀλλότρια σκοπεῖν.

27. λατρεία, *Apology,* 23c1.

28. Cf. *Phaed.* 85b ὁμόδουλός τε εἶναι τῶν κύκνων καὶ ἱερὸς τοῦ.. θεοῦ.

29. Aristotle. Π. φιλοσοφίας. frag. 1, Ross, καὶ τῶν ἐν Δελφοῖς γραμμάτων ἐδόκει τὸ γνῶθι σαυτόν, ὃ δὴ καὶ Σωκράτει ⟨τῆς⟩ ἀπορίας καὶ ζητήσεως ταύτης ἀρχὴν ἐνέδωκεν. Maier (see note 25 above) says that the Xenophon passage may have been the source of Aristotle's words: the remark that the *aporia* of the fragment is based on Xenophon 23 and 30 (beginning), and that *Zêtêsis* is based on 24 ff. in its entirety, is, however, somewhat over-ingenious.

30. W. Jaeger, *Aristotle*, Fundamentals of the History of his Development, trans. by R. Robinson, 2nd edn. (Oxford 1948), p. 130.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

32. *Charmides* 164d ff.—164e7 τὸ γὰρ Γνῶθι σαυτόν καὶ τὸ Σωφρόνει ἔστιν μὲν ταὐτόν.

33. *Phileb.* 48c ff.

34. *Rep.* 589a7 ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος cf. *Rep.* 443d1 ὡς ἀληθῶς περὶ ἑαυτόν, as construed by Adam (see note *ad loc.* in *The Republic of Plato,* text and commentary by J. Adam, with a new introduction by D. A. Rees, 2 vols. [Cambridge 1963])—on Dirlmeier's theory that this is the source of an Aristotelian phrase describing the self, see below note 45.

35. *Phaed.* 115 cd οὗτος Σωκράτης ὁ νυνὶ διαλεγόμενος.

36. pp. 9-11.

37. Frag. 3 Ross.

38. *Aristotle*, pp. 129 f.

39. Cf. Cicero *Leg.* I, 22,58; *Fin.* V, 16,44.

40. Cf. frag. 8 Ross.

41. Frag. 6 Ross.

42. *Eth. Nic.* 1166a16 and 1168b35.

43. F. Dirlmeier, *Nikomachische Ethik* Aristoteles, Werke in deutscher Uebersetzung, Band 6 (Berlin 1956), *ad loc.*

44. J. Burnet, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, text and commentary (London 1900).

45. In addition, Dirlmeier points out that the origin of Aristotle's ὅπερ ἕκαστος ἐστίν may be the Platonic phrase ὡς ἀληθῶς περὶ ἑαυτόν, *Rep.* 443d 1 (see above note 34). Likewise, the phrases λέγεται, ὡς, οὐκ ἄδηλον, at 1168b34 and 1169a2 would indicate that the thought is inherited, most likely from Plato.

46. I. Bywater, *Journal of Philology* 2 (1869), 55 ff.

47. Cf. *Aristotle*, pp. 66f., for the passage under discussion.

48. For another passage with the same idea and terminology, see *Eth. Nic.* 1178a2 δόξειε δ' ἂν καὶ εἶναι ἕκαστος τοῦτο, εἴπερ τὸ κύριον καὶ ἄμεινον, ὃ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δὴ ὁ κατὰ τὸν νοῦν βίος, εἴπερ τοῦτο μάλιστα ἄνθρωπος. For μάλιστα see the *Protrepticus* passage, p. 14.

49. *Met.* 1037a5 and 1043a34 ff.

50. I.e., according to form, to matter or to a combination of both, cf. *De An.* 403b3 ff; *Phys.* 200a24 ff; *De Part An.* 645a33. 5a33.

51. The passages from *Eth. Nic.* and *Met.* were mentioned by Theiler, *Sources*, p. 448, as examples of Aristotle's defining the self by its dominant part; J.M. Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 86 f., compares Plot. III 4, 3,22 ἑσμὲν ἕκαστος κόσμος νοητός.

52. SVF I 538 καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἐκάλει μόνην τὴν ψυχήν.

53. O. Gigon, *Grundprobleme der antiken Philosophie* (Berne 1959), p. 241.

54. *Somn. Scip.* 26.

55. *Tusc. Disp.* I, 52.

56. *Phaedr.* 245c ff.

57. Cf. *Plotins Schriften*, Vb, pp. 368 f.

58. Cf. also Marc. Aurel. 7, 16, 3 and 5, 26. For the attribution of the thought to Poseidonius see Theiler's notes in the Artemis edition of Marcus Aurelius on these passages. Of special importance is Plutarch, *Fac. Lun.* 945a: on it, see K. Reinhardt, RE XXII, 782 ff. (art. "Pos.").

59. *De An.* p. 1, 3 ff. Brun.

60. The first factor has so far escaped comment. On the second, cf. Bréhier *Ennéades*, tome IV, p. 183; P. Henry, *Sources*, p. 448.

61. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 14, 13.

62. See e.g. A.H. Armstrong, *Sources*, pp. 392 ff.; P. Henry, *ibid.*, pp. 429 ff.; P. Merlan, *Monopsychism*; F.P. Hager; "Die Aristoteles-interpretation des Alexander von Aphrodisias und die Aristoteleskritik Plotins bezüglich die Lehre vom Geist", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 46 (1964), 174-187.

63. On this work of Porphyry's cf. R. Beutler, RE XXII, 291, 7 ff.; W. Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin*, pp. 48 ff. (= *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, pp. 220 ff.).

64. III 579-583 Wachsmuth-Hense.

65. p. 14.

66. For this idea in Plotinus, see pp. 30, 43.

67. A.-J. Festugière, "L'ordre de lecture des dialogues de Platon au Ve/VIe siècles", *Museum Helveticum* 26 (1969), 285 f., n. 27, goes so far as to suggest that in Περὶ τοῦ γνῶθι σαυτόν Porphyry may have quoted the *Alcibiades* and recommended it as a book for beginners in philosophy. We have no evidence for this, but Porphyry's choice of the Plotinus treatise closest in purpose to the *Alcibiades* as the introduction to the Enneads would indicate his sensitivity to the propaedeutic powers of that dialogue. Our arguments in the preceding pages would lend substance to Festugière's suggestion.

68. The evidence is now conveniently assembled by Festugière in the article mentioned in the previous note.

69. L.G. Westerink, ed., *Proclus Diadochus: Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato*, critical text and indices (Amsterdam 1954).

70. *Phaedr.* 229e.

71. P. 9.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. P.P. Matter, *Zum Einfluss des Platonischen "Timaios" auf das Denken Plotins*, Berner Diss. (Winterthur 1964), p. 16.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-45, 79-96.

4. Cf. M. Wundt, *Plotin* I, p. 24, "Die Lehre Plotins unterliegt keiner eigentlichen Aenderung, es tritt nur eine merkliche Verschiebung der Akzente ein." This sentence is quoted by H.-R. Schwyzer in RE XXI, 548,10 (Art. "Plotinos").

5. The aptness of "reason" (*logizesthai* = discursive reasoning) as characteristic of the self will later become apparent, cf. pp. 40 ff.

6. The distinction is already made in the "astrological" treatise, II 3 [52], 13.

7. Cf. note *ad loc.* in *Plotinus Schriften*, 1b, p. 387.

8. Cf. pseudo-Plat. *Alcibiades I* 129 b-e.

9. 24 ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτός: for translation of *autos* see p. 89.

10. Cf. IV 4, 18,10 ff.; V 3, 3; I 1, 10.

11. Cf. *Rep.* 617 e.

12. Cf. *Rep.* 617 a.

13. ὁρμῇ οἰκείᾳ, 6,55.

14. W. Himmerich, *Parusia* (Festgabe Hirschberger), p. 495. Cf. the important discussion on the self in the same author's *Eudaimonia*, pp. 92-100, especially p. 95. See also p.5 of this work.

15. Himmerich, *Parusia*, p. 495.

16. Cf. IV 9 [8]; VI 4 [22], 4,34 ff.; 14,1 ff. See P. Merlan, *Monopsychism*, pp. 53 ff., who links it with the theory of the unicity of intelligence.

17. IV 3, 8,12. This object of vision is equivalent to the soul's *daimôn* in III 4. Cf. VI 7, 6,17.

18. Translating with Harder; cf. Theiler's note *ad loc., Plotins Schriften*, II b, p. 410.

19. IV 8, 4,32. See above p. 22.

20. Note *ad loc.* in *Plotinus Schriften*, II b. p. 501. It refers to the Cosmic Soul, which it was the purpose of chapters 1-8 of the treatise to distinguish from the human soul.

21. Cf. Homer, *Odyssey* XI 602; 617 ff.

22. Plotinus is thinking of *Odyssey* XI 405 ff., as Theiler, *Plotins Schriften*, II b, p. 502, has pointed out.

23. E. Bréhier, *La Philosophie de Plotin*, p. 73.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

25. Lines 57 f: –cf. Theiler's note *ad loc., Plotins Schriften*, V b, p. 353.

26. That the contents are not unrelated is shown by an interesting minor problem, posed by III 4, and by the theory of transmigration in general, and resolved partly in IV 3. In the former, it is a question of the reincarnation of the "self" in subsequent lives, human or otherwise. The problem is: what of the personal traits, the character acquired in the earlier life? Does it survive, or is it erased, only the dominant (be it logical, sensitive or vegetative) psychic phase surviving, depersonalized, in a new incarnation? The problem is acute only in cases of human re-embodiment. Now in IV 3, 27,15 ff. Plotinus mentions that upon the

death of a being whose soul is still "burdened", memories of earlier lives will reappear, and, if there is to be a succession of re-embodiments, there will be continued memories of former existences. Yet here, too, as in the case of the higher soul's selectivity (see p. 27),there will be a dismissal of the more recent and trivial memories. Thus personality survives, in this limited sense, several transmigrations.

27. Elsewhere called the "living body": in chapter 20,15 we learn that it is the lowest soul, namely nature (*physis*, cf. II 3, 9,21), that supplies this shadow or imprint. For "modified body" cf. I 1[53], 4,24 ff., where it is defined in terms of Aristotle's description of the soul at *De An.* 412a27.

28. Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1178a2 f. For Aristotle's definitions of the self, see above pp. 14 ff.

29. See above p. 21.

30. I.e. at I 1, 4,24. cf. above n. 27.

31. Cf. above p. 22.

32. Cf. III 6 [26].

33. ἔνδειαν: Theiler's reading for ἀλγηδόνα, which, as he observes, has crept into the text from the following chapter 19,1 f.; cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1173b7.

34. See pp. 41 ff.

35. Himmerich, *Parusia* (Festgabe Hirschberger), p. 495.

36. On the mid-phase of the soul's life, cf. V 2 [11], 2,21 ff.

37. It is, indeed, all things, cf. III 4, 3,21 ff.; IV 3, 8,12. See above p. 24.

38. A.H. Armstrong *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, p.225.

39. Cf. V 3 [49], 3,34-39.

40. Cf. chapter 15,2 τὸ μὲν ξύμπαν ὂν τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ ὂν εἶναι καὶ νοῦν καὶ ζῷον τέλειον εἶναι, cf. chapter 8,17 ff. On unity and gradation of ὄν, νοῦς and τὸ ζῷον see P. Hadot *Sources*, pp. 107 ff,

41. For text see *Plotins Schriften*, III: 11, καὶ ᾗ ζῷον ⟨τὸ πᾶν⟩, παντελές ἐστιν ἐκεῖνο· καὶ γὰρ καὶ ὁ ἐνταῦθα ἄνθρωπος [ᾗ ζῷον τὸ πᾶν] μέρος αὐτοῦ.

42. Of VI 7 Theiler, at *Plotins Schriften*, III b, p. 475, has said that it is "eine Generalrepitition des plotinischen Systems."

43. A remark made, in slightly different terms, by E. Bréhier, in the Budé *Plotin* VI/2, p. 47 (notice to VI 7).

44. *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and The Sophist of Plato*, translated with a running commentary by F.M. Cornford (London 1935), p. 8.

45. Albinus, *Didasc.* 163,24 ff. Hermann.

46. Source of the thought is the teaching of Poseidonius on *heimarmenê;* cf. Theiler, *Vorbereitung*, pp. 95 f.

47. One must recall the Plotinian insistence on the appropriateness of identifying "the beautiful" with real Being, cf. V 8, 9,37 ff.

48. J. Trouillard, *La Purification Plotinienne*, p. 15.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

50. Pp. 31 f.

51. See above p. 20.

52. Even though the consistency of VI 6 [34] with VI 7 [38] as against earlier treatises might support the theory of development.

53. See above pp. 29 f. It is subsequently rehabilitated at chapter 5,23 ff. – in a qualified sense – for man in the transcendent, somewhat forcibly, as Theiler has remarked, *Vorbereitung*, p. 67, n. 3.

54. Cf. II 7, 3,13 ff.

55. Theiler, *Vorbereitung*, pp. 66 f.

56. Cf. VI 3, 15,28 ff., discussed, p. 60.

57. J.M. Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 84-102.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Chapter 7, 29 ff., ὥστε εἶναι τὰς αἰσθήσεις ταύτας ἀμυδρὰς νοήσεις, τὰς δὲ ἐκεῖ νοήσεις ἐναργεῖς αἰσθήσεις.

61. See above p. 35.

62. *Plotinus*, pp. 96 f.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

64. See above p. 22.

65. Cf. IV 3, 8,12: see above pp. 24 f.

66. See above p. 37.

67. As Theiler, in *Plotins Schriften*, III b, p. 489, remarks, quoting VI 3, 7,22 in comparison.

68. IV 4, 33,35: the cause is the forming All – precisely by being All, *ibid.*, 36 f.

69. Cf. Theiler, *Vorbereitung*, pp. 90 ff.

70. J. Trouillard, *La Purification Plotinienne*, p. 66.

71. Cf. IV 4, 20,15.

72. *Ibid.*, chapter 18, 7.

73. Cf. IV 4, 18,11, where it becomes apparent that the present context adds nothing substantially new.

74. Above p. 29.

75. Pp. 30 f.

76. Cf. IV 3, 27, 7 f., and above pp. 26 ff.

77. Above p. 40.

78. Above pp. 24 f., 37.

79. For a discussion of this expression, see the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

80. V 3,3,34, ἢ αὐτοὶ μὲν οἱ λογιζόμενοι καὶ νοοῦμεν τὰ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ νοήματα αὐτοί· τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμεῖς.

81. Cf. IV 7, 1,22; IV 4, 18,14.

82. As Theiler, *Plotins Schriften*, V b, p. 374, has commented, the passage is problematic. Our interpretation agrees with his insofar as lines 1-4 seem to refer to the *dianoêtikon*, and lines 7-14 to the double self-knowledge of the *dianoêtikon* and *nous*: but we do not understand 4-7 to refer exclusively to *nous*, precisely because "the other things" (5) indicate *external* knowledge, inconsistent with the pure self-knowledge of *nous*. But the passage remains unclear. In 1-4, for example, why are two aspects of the *dianoêtikon's* relationship distinguished, when these are shown, in chapter 3,8 ff., to be one?

83. *Tim.* 69c ff.

84. See above p. 43; cf. also "the veritable man", I 1, 7,20.

85. Cf. *Rep.* 617e.

86. Cf. "modified body", IV 4, 18,20; 20,15.

87. Cf. IV 4, 18,11, etc.

88. See above pp. 39 f.

89. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 6,16.

90. Cf. IV 3, 27.

91. Cf. IV 4, 18; II 3, 9, etc.

92. Cf. V 3, 3,11.

93. See above pp. 24 f.

94. Cf. V 3, 2.

95. Cf. III 6, 1-5.

96. See above p. 46.

97. J. Trouillard, *La Purification Plotinienne*, p. 27.

98. VI 5, 2,24: cf. Bréhier's note in the Budé edition, *ad loc.* He refers to Arist. *An. Post.* I, chapters 9 and 10.

99. See above pp. 30 f., p. 41.

100. Cf. IV 8, 8,6 ff.

101. P.O. Kristeller, *Der Begriff der Seele in der Ethik des Plotin.* See especially his delineation of the "aktuelle Seite", i.e. "die auf der innerlich erfahrenen Steigerung des Bewusstseins (beruht)", *ibid.*, p. 6. This latter, he maintains, stands outside the scope of objective investigation, *ibid.*, p. 13.

102. K.-H. Volkmann-Schluck, *Plotin als Interpret der Ontologie Platos*, pp. 148 f.

103. W. Himmerich, *Eudaimonia*, pp. 96 f.

104. Cf. V 3, 6,23 ff. On the relation of self to consciousness see E.W. Warren, "Consciousness in Plotinus", *Phronesis* 9 (1964), 83-97, esp. 92-97.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Above p. 21.

2. Subsequently defined as *akin* to the divine (διὰ συγγένειαν, 19); cf. V3, 8,23 ff., esp. 44., and comment pp. 57 f.

3. Chapter 8,46; cf. chapter 9,1 ff.

4. Proclus gives support to the notion that the term *homoousion* is not used fortuitously here. At *In Tim.* III 245.21-246.28 he speaks against the theory that soul is *homoousion* with the Higher, basing himself on an interpretation of *Tim.*41d, and speaking of *ousiôdeis diaphorai* of souls, the one sovereign, the others determined, all existing

in a hierarchy from the divine to the human. Plotinus is mentioned by name as holding the mistaken view that souls are differentiated "by means of their acts (*energeiai*) alone" (245.26). Iamblichus (*apud* Stob. I, 372.23 W.-H.) reports on the same teaching as being held by Plotinus: for this view of Plotinus', cf. VI 7, 6,17, "each individual *is* that by which he acts" (see above p. 37). Furthermore, Proclus *In Tim.* III 231.5 objects to those "Platonists" who declare our soul to be ἰσοστάσιον and ὁμοούσιον ταῖς θείαις ψυχαῖς (245.20 ἰσάξιον), and say that it is αὐτὸν ... τὸν νοῦν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ νοητὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν—its fall into the realm of becoming belies these assertions, says Proclus. (These objections are of course based on Proclus' rejection of Plotinus' theory of the "undescended" part of the human soul; cf. *In Tim.* III 333.28; El. *Th.* prop. 211, and E.R. Dodds's note *ad loc.* in his *Proclus: The Elements of Theology*.)

5. See above p. 21.

6. For κόσμος νοητός cf. III 4, 3,21 ff. At the end of the quotation truth is attributed to the *noêta* insofar as they are "illuminated" by the Good: cf. VI 7, 22,7 ff. – the soul is not moved towards *nous*, in spite of the latter's beauty for this remains "supine" until "it take the light of the Good" and be permeated by a "glow from the divine". The One provides the necessary "grace" (*charis*), 7 and 24, which assures the beauty of *nous*.

7. See pp. 70 ff.

8. We can speak of "self" here because the term "soul" in IV 7 – as in III 4 – means essentially "self", as our investigation of these treatises in chapter 2 has shown.

9. *Theaet.* 176b.

10. R. Harder, *Ueber Ciceros Somnium Scipionis*, p. 128, n.2 (= *Kleine Schriften*, p. 369, n.55).

11. *Plotins Schriften* Ib, p. 560.

12. *Symp.* 202e.

13. Cf. VI 4, 14,23, "other man"; cf. also "twofold" in connection with "the composite" there, line 29.

14. See above pp. 42 f.

15. See above pp. 32 ff.

16. There is no need, given the sense of I 2, 6,1 ff. and VI 4, 14,25, to doubt that the self here referred to is the truest self of the *individual* rather than the Idea of Man.

17. See above pp. 35 ff.

18. That is, to τὸ ἀνθρώπῳ εἶναι opposed to ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, cf. V 9 [5], 13; VI 8 [39], 14; VI 3 [44], 9.

19. P. 53.

20. See above p. 25.

21. Cf. *Alcib.* 133c.

22. It is possible to see in the terms *su* and *sauton* designations of the notion of self which parallel *hêmeis* and *autos/hauton*. The influence of the Delphic formula is apparent here. Thus, in Porphyry's work "On 'Know Thyself'" (see above pp. 17 f.) the formula has clearly become the equivalent of *self*-knowledge.

23. Cf. the attempt of E. Bréhier, *La Philosophie de Plotin*, pp. 107-133.

24. For a judicious, if short contemporary view on oriental influences in Plotinus, see A.H. Armstrong in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 200 f., especially p. 201, n. 1.

25. This is the conclusion of J.M. Rist in his recent book *Plotinus*, chapter 16, "Mysticism" (pp.213-230). Rist convincingly shows, by dealing with an abundance of Plotinus texts, that the latter's mysticism is of the "theistic" type (pp. 214, 228), in R.C. Zaehner's sense of this term (as Dodds, *Sources*, p. 22, n. 2 had already suggested).

26. M. de Gandillac, *La Sagesse de Plotin*, pp. 182 ff.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

28. For a formulation of this paradox, cf. V 9, 10,10 ff.

29. Pp. 61 f.

30. The paradox noted above, p. 64 (See note 28).

31. P. 62.

32. See p. 57.

33. Cf. V 3, 13,17 ff.

34. P. 62.

35. *Plotins Schriften* Vb, pp. 351 f.

36. P. 65.

37. Elsewhere adduced for the same purpose at e.g. IV 9, 5,7 f. and V 9, 6,1 ff. Cf. there line 3 πάντα δὲ ὁμοῦ ἐκεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον διακεκριμένα (of νοῦς).

38. For idea of inclusion cf. also V 9, 6,16.

39. P. 64.

40. See above pp. 63 f.

41. See above p. 58.

42. See above p. 65; cf. also I 4, 9,27 ff.

43. Cf. here line 6 ἐν ψυχῇ τῇ πρώτῃ with e.g. V 1, 10,13, τὸ δὴ λογιζόμενον ... (17) ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ νοητῷ.

44. In the course of this section the term "reflexion" indicates the self-knowledge particular to *nous*.

45. Above pp. 7, 63 f.

46. The fact that chronology is vital to our examination of texts attributing reflexion to the One is another matter: there it is the nature of the One, and not of reflexion as such, that is in question.

47. *Sources*, p. 387.

48. O. Becker, *Plotin und das Problem der geistigen Aneignung*, p. 27. Becker had, in fact, read αὐτό for αὐτό in the phrase in question. H.-R. Schwyzer, *Gnomon* 32 (1960) 41 defends the reading αὐτό, and refers to the comment of G. Huber, *Das Sein und das Absolute*, (Basle 1955), p. 69, n. 11, where its significance for Plotinus' conception of the One is stressed. Cf. also the remarks of W. Beierwaltes, *Plotin Ueber Ewigkeit und Zeit*, p. 15, n. 5, "Gleichwohl darf ... *nicht* αὐτό gelesen werden, um das Eine nicht als selbstbezüglich, d.h. sich selbst reflektierend erscheinen zu lassen, wodurch es seine Einheit aufhöbe." These remarks are, in view of Beierwaltes' attempt to have the One as subject of the phrase, somewhat over-subtle.

49. Cf. H.J. Krämer, *Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik*, p. 398, n. 76.

50. K.-H. Volkmann-Schluck, *Plotin als Interpret*, p. 122.

51. For a convenient collection of texts see Schwyzer, *Sources* p. 374. But cf. also n. 63 below.

52. Becker, *Plotin*, p.31.

53. *Sources*, pp. 374 ff. and 389.

54. *Sources*, p. 382.

55. Cf. also V 4, 2,4 ff.

56. For a thorough and convincing demonstration of this, cf. Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, pp. 312 ff., who relates it to a philosophy of number inherent in the teaching, originally Pythagorean and introduced into the Academy by Xenocrates – following Plato's lecture "On The

Good" – namely, the teaching on the "One and the Unlimited Dyad".

57. Worthy of mention is the attempt of W. Beierwaltes, *Plotin Ueber Ewigkeit und Zeit*, p. 14, to give a philosophical interpretation of the passage, based upon his rendering of the phrase with the One as subject. He falls into the snare, however, of contradicting himself, an inevitable outcome when one must try to avoid attributing reflexion to the One while admitting its conversion. Thus he calls the One "beziehungslos", yet must speak of its "Selbstreflexion". What he calls "Reflexion des EINEN im ANDEREN", in an attempt to relate One and *nous* fundamentally, has been more happily formulated by Volkmann-Schluck: "Der Nous ist also nicht ein von dem Einen verschiedenes Seiendes, sondern es selbst, wie es denkbar wird, d.h. aber schon als Vielheit," *Plotin als Interpret*, p. 123. Here, in contrast to Beierwaltes, the *initiative* of reflexion is attributed to *nous*.

58. See pp. 63 f.

59. See p. 7.

60. Discussed above, pp. 52 f.

61. The probable wording of Heraclitus, given by Plutarch, *adv. Colot.* 20, 1118c (= Fr. B 101 DK) is: ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν. See above p. 12 (and n. 20 to chapter 1).

62. Harder, *Plotins Schriften*, Ib, p. 533, says, "die Formulierung ist so knapp, dass keine Sicherheit über den Sinn zu gewinnen ist."

63. As E.R. Dodds has pointed out, Plotinus here "toys with the opinion held by Numenius (*ap.* Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* XI, 18, 20) . . . that there is a higher *nous* which is *akinêtos* and a lower *nous* which moves" (Proclus, *Elements* p. 207), adding that he later explicitly rejects this opinion, at II 9 [33], 1,26 ff. There *nous* is paradoxically described, 29, as ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως ἐνεργείᾳ κείμενος ἑστώσῃ—a phrase that expresses the notion of its simultaneous *stability* and *movement*. (Dodds discusses the matter again in *Sources*, pp. 19 ff.) Plotinus returns to the notion again at V 3 [49], 7,13 ff., where he explains that νῷ ἡσυχία οὐ νοῦ ἐστιν ἔκστασις, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἡσυχία τοῦ νοῦ σχολὴν ἄγουσα ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνέργεια. Here is a new significance of ἡσυχία, equated, as in the last passage, with *energeia*, but meaning not merely "stability" but also "abstention from the alien", complete interiority – the guarantee, in turn, of the characteristic stability of *nous*. The early "Numenian" assumption of two "intelligences", the higher unmoved, is not unrelated to the above-mentioned reflexion or self-awareness of the One (see above pp. 71 f.), as J.M. Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 42 ff., has pointed out. Speaking of V 4 [7], 2,17 ff. καὶ ἡ κατανόησις αὐτοῦ αὐτό, οἱονεὶ συναισθήσει οὖσα ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ κτλ. Rist compares the phrase ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ with the "Numenian" III 9, 1,16, and also the latter

passage in II 9. He sees Plotinus using in our present phrase (in an early treatise) what remains of the idea of a double *nous*, "the static and higher being also a *noêton*" – cf. chapter 2,4, etc. In the word *katanoêsis* Rist sees an inaccuracy of terminology: in III 9, 9,22 *katanoêsis* is denied to the One. We believe that the latter passage is relatively late, *pace* Rist, who runs into difficulties by assuming it to be "Numenian" and so – implicitly – early. But Rist's connection of the problems of the One's self-awareness and the Numenian double *nous* clarifies the whole problem of the early phase of Plotinus' (as yet ambiguous) teaching on the One's transcendence.

64. Theiler's emendation of lines 4 f.—proposed to the present writer in the course of a conversation on the passage—καὶ οὐσία[ς] δὲ ἡ νοήσις καὶ ζωὴ[ς] νοήσις, would seem to clarify this otherwise most obscure phrase. Similarly, a further suggested emendation of Theiler's would solve another *aporia* in lines 8 f. As the passage stands, ἡ δὲ νοήσις ἡ αὐτῶν τὴν εἰκόνα φέρει, Plotinus would seem to be contradicting his usual insistence on the integral nature of self-knowledge, which is not of any εἰκών or τύπος, of any external image, but, by definition, of the very self, cf. e.g. V 3, 5, 23 ff; V 8, 10,35 ff. Now Theiler suggests ἡ δὲ νοήσις ἡ ἄλλων, which would thus make the phrase refer to normal knowledge of externals, which is contrasted with self-knowledge in the passages quoted. That this knowledge might be said to convey an εἰκών becomes meaningful if we understand it as being an εἰκών of *real* self-knowledge, or of *nous*, cf. V 3, 2,9, where, in addition to the *logizomenon's* (the faculty which knows normally, i.e. external data) working on sense impressions, it is said to receive *typoi* rising from *nous*.

65. Reading ἵνα ᾖ with Theiler at line 54. Henry-Schwyzer's retention of the MSS reading καὶ μὴ ὁμοῦ κτλ. (which they translate *quamquam nec simul nec nostrum id nec simpliciter*) makes the phrase contradict the preceding comment that τὰ ἀληθῆ ὄντως καὶ ἀίδια are not only ἐν τῷ ἁπλῶς but also ἐν ἑκάστῳ, as well as contradict the following ὅθεν καὶ τῶν ἁπλῶν ἡμῖν ὁ ἔρως—all statements which state explicitly that the self contains the real, the authentically existent, and in conscious, i.e. reflexive fashion.

66. See above pp. 22 ff.

67. Cf. VI 7, 6,17.

68. See above p. 73, with cited texts.

69. P. Merlan, *Monopsychism*, p. 82.

70. Alex. Aphrodis. *De An.* 86,17 ff. Bruns.

71. This fact would appear to have been overlooked by P.O. Kristeller, *Der Begriff der Ethik*, p. 69, when he suggests that the

passage means that the self is one with the *absolute* Good.

72. P. 72.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. K. Jaspers, "Das philosophische Grundwissen und unser Seinsbewusstsein", *Universitas* 23 (1968), 231.

2. Cf. VI 9 [9], 9,58 – the self is "light itself, pure. . . ."; V 5 [32], 7,34 – the *nous* does not know whether the light is "from within or without" – in fact, it is (*ibid.*, chapter 8,15) "present before all else".

3. *Plotins Schriften*, I b, p. 381.

4. Cf. Hierocles *In Carm Aur.* v. 1, p. 32.2 Mullach: ἄγαλμα θεῖον τεκταίνειν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν.

5. As J.M. Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 195, points out, a passage in Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*, 23,11, "enthroned above *nous* and all the Intellectual-Sphere (*noêton*)", referring to the transcendent God, with whom Plotinus attained union on four occasions, bears a close resemblance to IV 8, 1. Rist assumes, rightly, that Porphyry's words echo those of Plotinus. Lines 9 ff. of the same passage, asserting that Plotinus attained to vision of God by means of intellectual meditations (*tais ennoiais*), need not contradict this possibility: the passage would seem to stress merely the necessary intellectual *propaedeutic* to vision. Hence the reference to the *Symposium*, clearly meaning *Symp.* 210a ff., the ascent *preliminary* to vision of the Beautiful (there, 210d5, *dianoêmata*, in *penultimate* stage of ascent). There is no doubt that in this chapter of the *Vita* Porphyry wishes us to realize how the ultimate end of Plotinus' activity was to *transcend* intellectuality, "for the Term, the one end, of his (Plotinus') life was to become Uniate, to approach the God that transcends all" (15 f.), that God who is "first and all-transcendent" (7): and lines 11 f. put the matter beyond doubt.

6. Cf. chapter 10,9 ff.; 11,5 ὡς ἂν μὴ ἑωραμένον, ἀλλ' ἡνωμένον.

7. *Plotins Schriften* Ib, p. 486.

8. P. 83.

9. Pp. 82 ff.

10. That this lack of awareness need not necessarily lessen the *value* of the experience, cf. I 4, 10,21 ff., IV 4, 4,10 ff.

11. Cf. VI 7, 35,24 on the *nous emphrôn*.

12. See above pp. 83 f.

13. See above p. 84.

14. Cf. VI 7, 32,31 δύναμις οὖν ⟨οὖσα⟩ παντὸς καλοῦ ἄνθος ἐστί, κάλλους καλοποιόν, and I 8, 2,8, again of One, αὐτός τε γὰρ ὑπέρκαλος.

15. Cf. W. Kroll *De oraculis Chaldaicis* (Breslau 1894), 11,1 and n. 1 *ibid.*

16. I.e., by the double usage of *οἷον* in line 30.

17. Cf. R. Harder, "Eine neue Schrift Plotins", *Hermes* 71 (1936), 1-10.

18. On the theological implications of "as it is" and "that it is" cf. Theiler, *Vorbereitung*, pp. 141 ff., esp. p. 143, n. 1.

19. See note 17 above.

20. Already at III 8, 9,31 *nous* was called *amphistomos*.

21. Thus Harder "sie (i.e., soul) wird mit dem Geiste eins" – likewise Cilento. MacKenna renders differently: "the two visions (i.e. that in *nous* and that in soul) become one."

22. See above p. 85.

23. IV 8, 1; VI 9, 11,37 f., etc.

24. *Sources*, p. 448.

25. E.R. Dodds, *Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960), 1.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Cf. V 1,8,10 ff.

28. The immediately following circle-centre-radius image corroborates this, cf. VI 9, 8 and 10; VI 5, 5.

29. *Eth. Nic.* 1166a31.

30. Cf. VI 7, 34 and 35 above, pp. 88 ff.

31. E. Bréhier, *La Philosophie de Plotin*, p. 178.

32. P. 61.

33. Bréhier, *La Philosophie de Plotin*, p. 181.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 182. The concept of the One as absolute Subject or self is criticized by Krämer, *Geistmetaphysik*, p. 399, n. 81, who limits the sense of *autos* in the passages from VI 8 under discussion to that of the *metaphysical autonomy* of the One. But that which is absolutely autonomous is absolutely *itself*, purest *self-identity*: by saying no more than this, Bréhier would seem to avoid the anachronism (One as the *Ich* of German Idealism) of which Krämer accuses him. Our argument would tend to reinforce Bréhier's insight.

35. V 1, 7,12; V 4, 2,17. Cf. O. Becker, *Plotin und das Problem der geistigen Aneignung*, p. 31; Schwyzer, *Sources,* pp. 375, 389, and RE XXI, 561.

36. V 3, 13,12; VI 7, 41,22; V 6, 5,3; III 9, 9,13.

37. I.e., dividing the chapters with Theiler (in *Plotins Schriften*) as opposed to Bréhier, where these lines are 38, 25 ff.

38. Above p. 73.

39. See above p. 87.

40. Above p. 91.

41. For an interesting parallel description of matter and the One as non-reflexive, cf. III 6 [26], 15,27: matter cannot say "here am I", that is, it cannot postulate a self which would give it claim to real existence. In fact it is an "utter void" (26), a "something abandoned by all that really is", 29.

42. Above p. 85.

43. See above p. 92. For chapter division, see note 37 above.

44. Cf. also VI 8, 11,23 and III 7, 1,4.

45. J.M. Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 49 ff.

46. Passages quoted by Rist include Diog. Laert. 10, chapters 31, 35, 38, 50, 51 and 147; Lucretius II 740, 1047, 1080 (*animi iniectus* or *iactus*). On the term in Epicureanism see G. Vlastos, *Gnomon* 27 (1955), 70 f., cited by Rist.

47. Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 50.

48. P. 91.

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